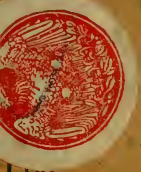


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FARM FOLKS

BY
ARTHUR LEWIS TUBBS



THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY
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FARM FOLKS

A Rural Play in Four Acts

BY

ARTHUR LEWIS TUBBS

Author of "THE FINGER OF SCORN," "THE HEART
OF A HERO," "FOLLOWED BY FATE," etc.



PHILADELPHIA
THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY

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Farm Folks

CAST OF CHARACTERS

PHILIP BURLEIGH	<i>From New York.</i>
DAVE WESTON	<i>A young farmer.</i>
AMOS GOODWIN	<i>Owner of Silverbrook Farm.</i>
'BIJAH FINN	<i>A Jack-of-all-trades.</i>
THOMPSON	<i>Servant at the Burleigh residence.</i>
FLORA GOODWIN	<i>"Only a country girl."</i>
MRS. BURLEIGH	<i>Philip's mother.</i>
GRACE BURLEIGH	<i>His sister.</i>
SARAH GOODWIN	<i>Wife of Amos.</i>
MRS. PEASLEY	<i>Who never has a minute to spare.</i>
DELIA SLOCUM	<i>Hired girl at the farm.</i>

ARGUMENT

Flora Goodwin, a farmer's daughter, is engaged to Philip Burleigh, a young New Yorker. Philip's mother wants him to marry a society woman, and by falsehoods makes Flora believe Philip does not love her. Dave Weston, who wants Flora himself, helps the deception by intercepting a letter from Philip to Flora. She agrees to marry Dave, but on the eve of their marriage Dave confesses, Philip learns the truth, and he and Flora are reunited.

SYNOPSIS

- ACT I.—The yard at Silverbrook Farm, on an afternoon in August.
- ACT II.—Same as Act I, three days later.
- ACT III.—At the Burleigh residence, New York City. One month has elapsed.
- ACT IV.—Back at the farm, a few days afterward.

TIME OF PLAYING :—Two hours and a half.

COSTUMES AND CHARACTERISTICS

PHILIP BURLEIGH. A handsome, polished New York business man, about twenty-five or thirty years old. He is cultured and "stylish," without affectation or pomposity; of a frank and friendly disposition. In Act I he wears a handsome summer suit appropriate for traveling, with straw hat. Act III, evening dress. Act IV, dark suit, Derby hat, which he carries and lays aside as he enters.

DAVE WESTON. A good-looking, sturdy and manly young farmer, of the rugged and wholesome type. He wears in Acts I and II a plain but neat summer suit, with soft or straw hat. Act IV, the same, or similar attire.

AMOS GOODWIN. Typical farmer, but not of the "hayseed" type; rather, a prosperous and intelligent countryman, about sixty years of age. In Acts I and II he wears his working clothes, which, however, are not untidy; large straw hat. Act IV, plain suit, neat, and a bit more dressy.

'BIJAH FINN. If convenient, he should be a long, "lanky" individual, rather "green," though shrewd and by no means a bumpkin. In Acts I and II he wears baggy trousers, or overalls, with colored shirt; vest, but no coat; tattered straw hat. He carries a small satchel containing his working tools. In Act III he is dressed in his new "best suit," which looks cheap and countrified. In Act IV he shows an attempt at "city style," with a cheap fancy suit, gay vest, flaring necktie, etc.

THOMPSON. Livery, or dress-suit, appropriate to the butler in a fashionable city residence. He is very stiff and pompous, generally looking straight ahead, and never deigning to smile.

FLORA GOODWIN. A pretty, demure country girl, eighteen to twenty-two years old. She shows gentility and refinement, though she is inclined to shyness. She wears in Acts I and II pretty and becoming but modest summer dresses. Act IV, dress of some dark material, the waist of which she changes for one more elegant, though it is not elaborate.

MRS. BURLEIGH. A handsome, dignified and haughty woman of fifty or sixty. Tall, stately, with gray hair, but a comparatively young face. In Act II she is attired in an elegant summer gown, appropriate to out-

door wear, with hat, parasol and a lorgnette. Act III, very elaborate evening gown, with jewels.

GRACE BURLEIGH. Typical city girl of beauty and culture, but inclined to be a bit "free and easy" when opportunity offers. Evidently reared in pride, but of a gentle nature which reflects more of her brother's kindness and sincerity than of her mother's haughtiness. Her costume in Act II is a fancy summer dress, with large hat, etc., all rich and in excellent taste. Act III, pretty house dress, which she changes to an elegant evening gown. Act IV, traveling outfit.

SARAH GOODWIN. A plain farmer's wife, about fifty, motherly and sympathetic; hair combed straight back, done up in knot behind. Neat dresses, appropriate to the occasion.

MRS. PEASLEY. A nervous, fussy little woman of the typical "country gossip" type; forty to fifty years of age. In Acts I and II she wears a calico dress, with sunbonnet or small hat. Act IV, neat calico or gingham dress, with white apron.

DELIA SLOCUM. The typical country "hired girl." Acts I and II, calico dress, with apron; not too neat. Hair somewhat awry, though she should not be exactly "slouchy." A bit cranky at times, but good-natured and likeable withal. Her get-up in Act III should be a bit grotesque, but not overdone. Act IV, plain house dress, with white apron. She is to be as funny as possible, without becoming a caricature.

PROPERTIES

ACT I.—Pan, containing potatoes; paring knife. Glass of water. Small parcel. Slip of paper. Hand-bag or dress-suit case. Camp-stool, sketching or painting materials.

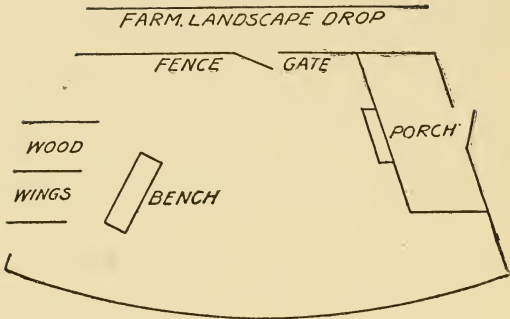
ACT II.—Knitting or sewing work. Sealed, stamped and addressed envelope. Glass of water. Letter, stamped and addressed, the envelope torn open. Letter, same as in Act I.

ACT III.—Book. Satchel, bundle, etc. Small kit of pocket tools.

ACT IV.—Cabinet organ off stage. Cook-book. Waist to Flora's "going-away" dress. Sewing materials. Flour. Letter, same as in Acts I and II. Traveling bags.

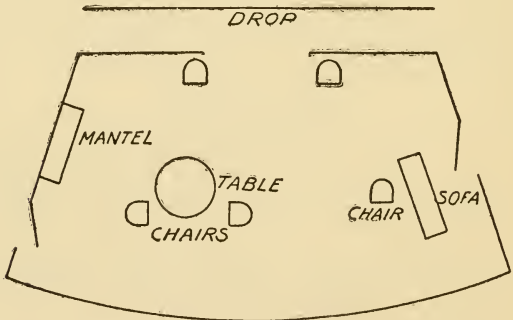
SCENE PLOTS

ACTS I AND II



SCENE.—Yard at Silverbrook Farm. Landscape drop. House, with porch, L. Fence along back, with gate c. Wooden bench down R.

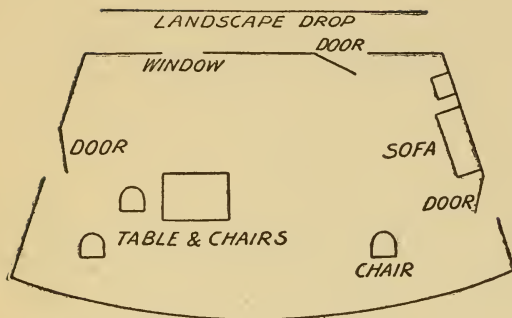
Act III



SCENE.—Parlor at Burleigh's house, New York. Wide door with portières, c. Doors R. and L. Mantel, up R., with clock. Table and chairs R. c. Sofa and small chair or tabouret L. Chairs near door c. Other furnishings as desired.

SCENE PLOTS

ACT IV



SCENE.—Sitting-room at Silverbrook Farm. Doors R. and L., and door in flat, L. Window in flat, R. Table and chairs R. and chair and sofa L. Tall clock up R. Other furnishings as desired.

Farm Folks

ACT I

SCENE.—*The yard at Silverbrook Farm. House, with porch L. ; fence along back, with gate C. ; farm backing. There is a wooden bench down R., and the usual surroundings of a prosperous farm. Discover DELIA SLOCUM, with pan, peeling potatoes, seated on steps of porch. As the curtain rises, 'BIJAH FINN is heard whistling off R. ; DELIA sets down pan, rises and goes to gate, looks off to R., and after a slight pause hurriedly goes back to porch and resumes her task. 'BIJAH comes slowly in from R., beyond fence, still whistling, at first not noticing DELIA. He passes gate, pauses, looks about, and sees her. She does not look up until after he speaks.*

'BIJAH. Why, Delia, that you? I didn't see y', just at fust.

(Goes back and stands leaning over fence, L. C., looking earnestly at her.)

DELIA. My name's Miss Slocum, Mr. Finn. Please call me by it.

'BIJAH. Sho! Wal, now, I thought it was Delia.

DELIA. So it is, but it's "Miss" t' you, f'r yet a while. I don't call you by y'r first name, do I?

'BIJAH. No, but 'tain't my fault. Wish y' would. *(Pause, during which she works busily, ignoring him, while he regards her with a good-natured, rather affectionate, expression.)* What y' doin', De—Miss Slocum?

DELIA. Can't you see?

'BIJAH. Looks some like you was a-peelin' somethin'.

DELIA. Land, ain't you brilliant? Wonder 'f you can tell what. *(Rises, goes and shows him the potatoes.)* What do they look like—squashes 'r turnips?

'BIJAH. Why,—er—they look some like p'taters, seems t' me. D' know's I'd call 'em either squashes 'r turnips.

DELIA. Well, that's jest what they are—p'tatoes—and I'm peelin' 'em for supper. (*She has resumed her seat.*) Takes an awful lot, too, they're such eaters, 'n' always want a meat supper, even in the summer time. I declare, y' might's well be a black slave, 'n' done with it, as hired girl on a farm.

'BIJAH. S'pose 'tis a kind of a hard job. Why don't y' git married,—m'm—Miss Slocum?

DELIA. Yes,—'n' do jest as much work only not get any pay for it. No, thank y', Mr. Finn, I'll work for wages, if I've got t' work. Where you started for?

'BIJAH. Up t' Perkinses', t' fix their stoop. So y' ain't got no idee o' gitt'n' married, Miss—a—Slocum?

DELIA. No, I ain't; 'n' if I had, it wouldn't be no Jack-of-all-trades.

'BIJAH. Sho! y' don't say? Meanin' me, I s'pose? Wal, they can't say 't I ain't master o' none. I cal'late whatever I do, 's done right. B'sides, 'f I do say it m'self, when y' come right down to it, y' might do wuss. I've enough in the bank t' buy an umbreller when that rainy day comes 't they tell about. 'Tany rate, I d' know's I've perposed yet.

DELIA. Land! I didn't say 't you had, 'n' it wouldn't do you any good if y' did. I guess you ain't the only man in th' world.

'BIJAH. Guess I ain't. 'F I was, I'd have a cinch. Wal, guess I'll be gitt'n' along. (*Starts L., but looks back, off R.*) Here comes Mis' Peasley, like all p'sessed.

DELIA (*rising*). H'm! I'll go in the house. If she gets started once, they's no saying when she'll stop.

(*About to go in house when MRS. PEASLEY hurries in R., down through gate.*)

MRS. PEASLEY. Good-afternoon, Delia. (*DELIA is compelled to pause and comes back to edge of porch.*) Mis' Goodwin t' home?

DELIA. Yes. I'll go 'n' call her. (*Starts.*)

MRS. P. I wish y' would. I want t' see her, but I ain't got a minute t' spare. And, Delia —

DELIA. Well?

MRS. P. I wonder if it 'd be too much trouble for you t' give me a drink of water. I'm so dry.

DELIA. Why, no, of course not. I'll get you some.

(Exit to house.)

'BIJAH. How d' do, Mis' Peasley?

MRS. P. *(sitting on edge of porch, fanning herself with her sunbonnet or apron)*. Why, how d' do, Mr. Finn? Awful warm, ain't it?

'BIJAH. Wal, 'tain't much like it was last Christmas. Suits me, though. I like hot weather, 'n' I'd worry a good deal more 'f they said wicked folks had t' go to a cold place. I'd ruther fry than freeze.

MRS. P. Land, what talk! I guess you won't have no choice. *(Glances into house.)* Contrary 's ever?

'BIJAH. Who?

MRS. P. I guess you know who I mean. Delia Slocum, of course. Everybuddy knows you've be'n shinin' up to her f'r the last five 'r six years. Dretful hang-offish, ain't she?

'BIJAH. Wal, what's wuth havin' 's wuth wait'n' for, 'n', t' tell the truth, I ain't never come to the p'int yet, so they's no sayin'. As f'r shinin' up to 'er, I'll admit they's be'n a few sparks, but I d' know's I'd 'xactly call it a shine. Here she comes.

(Enter DELIA with a glass of water.)

DELIA. Here it is, Mis' Peasley.

MRS. P. *(taking the glass)*. Thanks, Delia. *(Drinks.)*

DELIA. Have some, Mr. Finn?

'BIJAH. No, thanks, I ain't thirsty. Jest had a drink out o' Bennett's pump.

MRS. P. *(giving DELIA the glass, just as SARAH GOODWIN enters from house, down to L. C.)*. Oh, good-after-noon, Mis' Goodwin. I jest stopped t' see 'f I could get your receipt for riz biscuit. Of course, I know how, but they ain't nothin' like yours—the kind you had that time they had the church sociable at your house. They was the best I ever eat.

SARAH. Why, certainly, Mrs. Peasley. If you'll wait, I'll write it down.

(DELIA goes into the house. 'BIJAH still by fence.)

MRS. P. Thanks. I'll appreciate it, Mis' Goodwin. Y' see, my summer boarders arrived last night, 'n' I want t' make some for supper.

SARAH. Did they? I thought they wasn't coming till next week?

MRS. P. So did I, but they took a sudden fit 'n' come right in on me. I was terribly upset, they're sech dretful stylish folks. But I'll have t' be goin'. (*Starts up c.*) I'm goin' to the store to order some things, 'n' I ain't got a minute t' spare. Anything I can do for y' down 't the village, Mis' Goodwin?

SARAH. No, thank you, Mrs. Peasley. Can't you wait for that receipt?

MRS. P. I'll stop on my way back. I've got t' hurry like anything. I never was so rushed. (*Up to gate, but pauses and comes part way back.*) Yes, they're awful stylish. I s'pose you know who 'tis?

SARAH. Why, no, I don't. I haven't heard.

'BIJAH. Neither 've I, Mis' Peasley. Who be they?

MRS. P. Why, it's Mis' Burleigh 'n' her daughter, from New York, the mother 'n' sister of that Mr. Burleigh 't was here last summer 'n' paid so much attention t' your Flora, Mis' Goodwin.

SARAH. You don't say? I wonder whatever brings them here.

MRS. P. M'm—wal, I couldn't say, but I kind o' s'mise—I d' know's I'd ought t' say, Mis' Goodwin. I'm afeared you might be offended.

SARAH. Why, I don't know what you mean.

'BIJAH. Might's well out with it, Mis' Peasley. A hint's wuss 'n the plain facts, sometimes.

MRS. P. I don't know as it is a fact, but—wal, I've heard some folks say that he hadn't ought t' pay her s' much attention unless he meant something by it. Seems t' me mebbe he does, 'n' his folks have come here t' kind o' look your Flora over, 'n' see what they think of her.

SARAH. Oh! I hardly think that.

MRS. P. Wal, I d' know. That's just my idee. But I must go. Here I stand, talkin', when I ain't got a minute t' spare. (*About to go, but again pauses.*) They certainly are stylish, though. What d' you think? They took on something terrible b'cause I couldn't give 'em a "sweet of rooms," as they call it,

with a "bath attached," whatever that is. 'N' the things they want fixed up t' eat, 'n' the style they put on, is the worst I ever see. But, then, I s'pose they're awful rich.

'BIJAH. Millionaires, ain't they?

MRS. P. That's what I've heard. But I must say, that young Mr. Burleigh never acted that way. He used t' make himself real common.

SARAH. No, nobody could ever call him stuck up, though you can see that he's a perfect gentleman. Why, he used to come in last summer and set down and eat a meal of victuals with us, just like he was one of us. It used to mortify Flora, though, because we didn't have things nicer. But I told her, if he was one of the kind that thought any the less of us because we was plain farm folks, without any style, he wasn't the kind we need care about. But I must say, he never gave us the least cause to think he felt above us.

MRS. P. Wal, then, mebbe he means t' marry her. I hope he does, 'cause if he don't show no signs of it when he comes back, folks'll be sure t' talk, 'n'—but I never gossip, 'n' it ain't none o' my business. I must be goin'. Good-bye, Mis' Goodwin.

(Through gate, passing 'BIJAH and going L.)

SARAH. Good-day, Mrs. Peasley. I'll have your receipt ready.

MRS. P. *(she has paused, standing where 'BIJAH did, he having come part way down to C.)* I'll be ever so much obliged. *(Starts, then again comes back.)* Oh, Mr. Finn, I meant to ask you if you couldn't stop in n' mend our clock. It loses time so 't it bothers me terrible.

'BIJAH. Yes, Mis' Peasley, I'll be there t'-morrer afternoon. I'll be busy in the forenoon. Got t' put a pane o' glass in for Sam Newell.

MRS. P. Wal, that'll have t' do then. Dear me, I must hurry down t' that store. I never was so rushed. Seems t' me I never do have a minute t' spare.

(Hurries off L.)

'BIJAH. Don't you pay no 'tention t' what she says, Mis'

Goodwin. She ain't wuth noticin'. 'N' as for that Mr. Burleigh 'n' your Flora,—I reckon he ain't the kind t' do nothin' 't ain't jest square. (*Goes up.*) Any work y' want done, Mis' Goodwin?

SARAH. Why, yes, 'Bijah. I want the sitting-room papered. When can you do it?

'BIJAH (*up beyond fence*). Middle o' next week, soon's I get through shinglin' Joe Thompson's roof. I'll be over t'-morrer 'n' see y' 'bout it. Good-day.

(*'BIJAH goes off to L. ; SARAH exits to house, and as she disappears DAVE WESTON enters, R. He stands up R. for a moment, looking about, then comes down, just as DELIA enters from house. He carries a small package. DELIA comes down steps and starts to cross to R. DAVE stops her.*)

DAVE. What's your hurry, Delia? I want to ask you something.

DELIA. I've got t' go 'n' see 'f them hens have laid any eggs.

DAVE. I hope they haven't laid bricks, or anything like that. I —

DELIA. Huh! think you're smart, don't y'? What you want?

DAVE. I want to know something, and —

DELIA. Oh, y' do? Well, I never see a man yet that didn't need t'. What is it?

DAVE. That's what I don't know. If I did, I wouldn't ask you. (*Gets closer to her.*) Delia, you must know I'm in love —

DELIA. What! Land, you men're all alike. That's two t'-day. Well, I ain't in the market. (*Starts toward R.*) Them eggs'll have time t' hatch, if I stand here talkin' t' you.

DAVE. Just a minute. It isn't you I'm in love with, so I wouldn't count those chickens before they're hatched.

DELIA (*turning, coming back*). Oh, indeed? I guess you didn't fool me none. I ain't s' blind 's not t' know who you're in love with, n'r t' see that she's got better chances 'n yourn. I know what you want—it's how much I know about Flora Goodwin and that rich Mr. Burleigh from New York. All I've got t' say is, you

must be pretty slow if you ain't found out how the land lays, by this time.

DAVE. She won't give me an answer—at least, I ——

DELIA. You mean you won't take it when she gives it, I guess. Well, I ain't no matrimony agency, 'n' if they say a woman can't keep her mouth shut, I'm here t' prove it ain't no such thing. (*Goes to R.*)

DAVE. He came to-day.

DELIA. Who did—Mr. Burleigh?

DAVE. I thought that would interest you. Yes, Mr. Burleigh. I saw him.

DELIA. 'N' I s'pose you're worried f'r fear he's come t' take her away from y'? How d' y' know but what it's me he's come to perpose to?

(*Laughs and runs off R. DAVE stands for a minute looking after her, starts up C., but pauses as AMOS GOODWIN enters, R. At the same time, SARAH reappears on porch, with a slip of paper in her hand.*)

AMOS. Why, hello, Dave. Quit work early t'-day, didn't y'?

DAVE. Yes. I've been over to Glenville to get a few things, and to have the horses shod. Where's Flora? I brought her something.

(*Swings package in his hand.*)

SARAH. Did you, Dave? That's real kind of you. Flora went down in the meadow with her painting things. Says she's going to paint a picture of the old sawmill. She's taken a wonderful fancy to painting pictures, here of late.

DAVE. Yes, I know she has. Seems to me she's getting altogether too many high notions. It won't do her any good.

SARAH. High notions? Why, Dave, I don't know just what you mean. She always did have ideas above her pa and me, but you know she spent a whole month up in Albany one winter, with his cousin's folks, and ever since then she's tried to improve herself.

DAVE. Yes, and get herself up where she'll look down on common folks like me. I can see how it'll be, especially since that city fellow got her on a string, last summer.

AMOS. I wouldn't talk that way, Dave. Flora ain't the kind t' let any feller get her "on a string," as you call it; 'n' as for her feelin' above them that's always be'n ev'rything to 'er, you ain't got no call t' say that.

DAVE. Well, she'll get talked about, Mr. Goodwin, if that young Burleigh takes it up where he left off last summer. He arrived this noon.

SARAH. Did he? Why, Mrs. Peasley said he wasn't coming for a day or two.

DAVE. Well, he has. I saw him in the stage from Glenville. It's a wonder he didn't let Flora know he was coming.

SARAH. Why, he did, only ——

DAVE. So, he writes to her, does he? Has all winter, I suppose?

SARAH. I guess she had a few letters from him, Dave.

DAVE. So, that's how the land lays, is it? Well, he won't find it such smooth sailing, if I have anything to do with it. (*Goes up L.*)

AMOS. Now, Dave, it won't do for you t' go t' gitt'n' riled.

SARAH. He's a perfect gentleman, Dave, and they're only just friends.

DAVE (*coming down a few steps, showing rising anger*). I'd like to know what you're thinking of, and you her own father and mother! You must be blind. Don't you know that a fellow and a girl can't be friends that way, if he doesn't mean anything by it? Well, they can't; not if the girl cares anything about her reputation.

AMOS. Hold up, Dave, you're goin' a little too fast. I can understand your feelin' kind o' worked up over it, seein' you want Flora for y'rself, but I ain't goin' t' let you make no sech hints 's that. I guess my little girl's reputation is safe. It's safe in Mr. Burleigh's hands, too, 'n' I don't need a lecture from you, yet a while, about my own daughter's reputation.

SARAH. Now, Amos, Dave meant all right.

DAVE. Why, of course I did, Mr. Goodwin. But, I tell you, this means a lot to me, and I've heard too much about these rich city fellows and their country sweet-hearts. I hope you'll forgive me if I said anything. I didn't mean to offend you.

AMOS. Oh, that's all right, Dave ; I know you didn't. It was real good of you t' bring Flora a present, 'n' I know she'll appreciate it. Want t' wait till she comes, 'n' give it to her ?

SARAH (*on porch*). She'll be back pretty soon. It's 'most supper time.

DAVE. No, I guess I'll walk down toward the mill and see if I can't find her. You don't think she'd care, do you ?

SARAH. Care ? Why, Dave, how can you ask such a thing ? She'll be glad to see you, of course, and that present 'll be sure to tickle her. (*In door.*) Of course, I don't know what it is, but whatever it is —

DAVE. It's a comb and brush in a blue plush case, Mrs. Goodwin.

SARAH. Well, now, if that ain't just the thing ! It wasn't more'n a week ago I heard her say she'd ought to have a new brush and comb. I declare, Dave, I guess you're a mind reader.

(*Exit to house.*)

AMOS. 'Twas real lucky you happened t' hit it like that, wa'n't it, Dave ?

DAVE. Yes, I'm glad I did. Guess I'll go along down that way, and see if I can find her.

AMOS. Yes, Dave, I would. (*DAVE goes up toward gate ; AMOS crosses to porch. As DAVE reaches C., and is about to go off to L., FLORA GOODWIN is heard laughing merrily off L. DAVE looks off, with an angry expression, then turns and comes down to R., standing with his back toward L. C.*) That's her, ain't it, Dave ?

(*DELIA enters R., holding up her apron. She crosses slowly and goes into house, looking back curiously.*)

DAVE. Yes, it is ; and that city fellow.

(*He goes R., throws the parcel away, over fence, and exits angrily, R., without looking back.*)

AMOS (*on porch*). Why, Dave !

(*Comes down to L. C., just as FLORA enters L., behind fence, accompanied by PHILIP BURLEIGH. He carries a small*

hand-bag and her camp-stool; she has a palette and paint-box. They come down through gate, chatting merrily.)

FLORA. Oh, here's father. Father, here is Mr. Burleigh. He just arrived on the stage and overtook me on the way.

PHILIP (*cordially, shaking hands with AMOS*). How do you do, Mr. Goodwin? I'm glad to see you.

AMOS. Glad t' see you, too, Mr. Burleigh. 'N' I guess I ain't the only one, nuther.

(With a knowing look at FLORA.)

FLORA (*hanging her head; blushing*). Why, father, of course I am glad to see Mr. Burleigh—very glad.

PHILIP. Not half so glad as I am to be here with you again, and to see you, my ——— (*Pauses, in some confusion.*) Well, it does seem, if you really are so glad to see me again, you might drop that formal "Mister."

FLORA. Why,—I—of course, only ———

PHILIP (*he has set down his bag and the camp-stool; now goes and stands close to her, taking her hand*). Mr. Goodwin, I have come back to ask you to give me your little girl.

AMOS. Why—er—Mr. Burleigh, ain't this kind o' sudden?

PHILIP (*smiling*). Seems to me it is her place to say that. But, to tell the truth, I don't see as it is so very sudden. I made up my mind to it last summer, but she put me off, and made me promise I'd wait till now, and said if I came back still wanting her, she would "see." Well, here I am—she sees, says "yes," and now—I hope you'll let me have her.

AMOS. So, little one, it's come to this?

FLORA. Yes, father.

(She goes to him; he takes her in his arms, her head resting on his shoulder. PHILIP goes up, stands by fence, and looks off to R.)

AMOS. And you love him—for sure?

FLORA. Oh, father—so much! And he loves me, too, just think of it. He loves me, and I only a country girl.

AMOS. Wal, why shouldn't he, 'n' how could he help it? I think all the more of him for it.

FLORA. Oh, father! then you are willing?

AMOS. Sure, I am, if it means your happiness. It's goin' t' be mighty hard t' give you up, but I want my little girl t' do jest what'll make her the happiest. (To PHILIP.) So you want her, do y'?

PHILIP. I do, Mr. Goodwin, with all my heart.

AMOS. Then I ain't goin' t' stand in the way. Take her. But I want you both t' think what y're doin'. I think too much of her, Mr. Burleigh, t' think that she ain't good enough for y', if you be rich 'n' stylish, 'n' she only the daughter of a plain old country farmer. I think my girl's good enough f'r any man, even a dook 'r a prince, but sometimes it ain't jest them—sometimes others step in.

PHILIP. You mean my family—my mother. I am sure when she sees my little sweetheart —

AMOS. Wal, I s'pose it won't be long. You can bring her around t'-morrer.

PHILIP. Why, I don't understand. She is miles away from here.

AMOS. Is, is she? I guess it ain't many miles up t' Mis' Peasley's.

FLORA. Father! Is she —

AMOS. Of course she is, her 'n' her daughter. Mis' Peasley was here not fifteen minutes ago, 'n' said they come last night.

PHILIP. Why, that's strange. My mother told me they were going to Newport, and said nothing about coming here. She knew I was coming in a few days, but I got away sooner than I expected, and—I—I don't know what to make of it.

FLORA. Perhaps she wanted to give you a surprise, Mr. Bur—Philip.

AMOS. Or git here 'n' see Flora, 'n' kind o' look us all over b'fore you got here. I s'pose she knew about you 'n' Flora?

PHILIP. Why,—yes; I told her just before she left. She —

AMOS. How'd it strike her?

PHILIP. She never saw Flora—she has other plans for me, but—she wishes to see me happy, and, I am sure, once she has seen the little woman I have chosen for my wife, she will give her consent. But I can't understand

why she should come here without letting me know. So she is boarding at Mrs. Peasley's?

AMOS. Yes. It ain't exactly what you'd call stylish, but it's the best place around here where they take boarders, 'n' Mis' Peasley has the name of sett'n' a good table. I s'pose you're going t' board there, too?

PHILIP. Why, yes; I wrote to Mrs. Peasley, telling her I should like to stay with her for a few days, but I didn't expect to come for a week or so yet, so I suppose she isn't ready for me.

AMOS. Oh, I guess she can tuck you in somewhere. So you ain't come t' stay all summer?

PHILIP. Oh, no; only for a couple of days. I must be back at the store by Saturday. You see, my manager has gone for a trip to Europe, and it makes it difficult for me to get away. But I have not been feeling very well of late, and the heat in the city is depressing. I felt as if I must have a little relaxation. And then, I wanted to see Flora. (*Looks about.*) Where is she?

AMOS. Run away, didn't she? I guess she's kind o' scart. Wal, you go on in the house there, 'n' I reckon you'll find her wait'n' fer y'.

PHILIP (*going to steps*). All right, I will; and then I must get up to Mrs. Peasley's, for it must be nearly dinner time. (*On porch. To himself, as he goes into house.*) Mother—here—without letting me know. I—wonder —

(*AMOS looks after him, at first doubtfully, then shaking his head sideways as if to say, "It's all right." He starts up C., but turns, as SARAH, after a pause, enters from house.*)

SARAH. Oh, you here, Amos? (*Comes down.*) He's in there with her, and—oh, Amos, I'm afraid he's filling her head with ideas that won't do her any good.

AMOS. Now, mother, don't you go t' thinkin' up things like that. He says he loves her, 'n' if I know anything about men, he's one.

SARAH. I don't mean to say he isn't, but even if he did mean it, and should make her his wife, it would be an unequal match, and I've heard that no good ever comes from them. Besides, I'm worried about Dave Weston.

AMOS. Oh, pshaw, I guess Dave'll git over it.

SARAH. Yes, but he thinks Flora meant to take him, before Mr. Burleigh came along, and I don't know but what he had a right to think so. Anyhow, I don't like the way he takes it, and—well, Mr. Burleigh being from the city, and so rich and all; and then there's that stuck-up mother and sister of his ——

AMOS. There you be, imaginin' things ag'in. Why, you ain't never even seen 'em yet.

SARAH. Mebbe I ain't, but I know what they are. Mis' Peasley ——

AMOS. Oh, if y' want t' listen t' her ——

SARAH. It isn't what she says, it's common sense. They're rich and stylish, and live in the city, and we're nothing but plain farm folks. It don't seem natural. Here comes Mrs. Peasley back. (*She goes to R. C. ; AMOS is L. C. Enter MRS. P. from L. ; pauses in gate.*) It didn't take you long.

MRS. P. No, I hurried so I'm all out of breath. That's jest the way I go, from mornin' till night. I never have a minute t' spare. (*Comes down.*) I declare, I guess I'll have t' rest a minute, I'm that tuckered out. (*Goes and sits on edge of porch.*) I never was so upset, all them folks comin' at once, 'n' such high-toned big-bugs, too. I never see the beat of that Mis' Burleigh, the airs she puts on. She holds her head up 's if she had a stiff neck, 'n' looks at y' through a pair of spectacles fastened onto a parasol handle. (*Fans herself.*) My, I ain't got my breath yet. I can't hardly talk.

AMOS. Too bad.

SARAH. I s'pose they are real stylish?

MRS. P. Stylish ain't no word for it. That woman looks like she could murder anybuddy that went ag'inst her. I wouldn't want t' be the one. I thought she was goin' t' cut my head off b'cause I told her I didn't have no bathroom. Mr. Burleigh ain't a bit like her. He was perfectly satisfied with a wash-tub.

SARAH. Yes, he's a nice young man, but I guess she kind of rules him.

AMOS. I guess she don't. That's where you don't know him.

MRS. P. Land, I d' know. All is, I'd be afraid t' say the

moon wa'n't made out o' green cheese, 'f she said it was. (*Rises.*) Wal, I must be goin'. I got t' git up a big dinner. Dinner, mind y'. She says they always have dinner 't night, 'nstid of the middle of the day. I never heerd of sech a thing. Ain't city folks queer? Now, Mr. Burleigh, he'd eat cold biled cabbage 'r anything, 'n' seem t' like it. But her—land, she's got t' have things in "courses," 'n' the table all cleared off every time b'fore y' bring on the next. I d' know how I'm ever goin' t' keep a girl. 'Lizy Bates 's kicked already. Says she ain't goin' t' be bossed around by any stuck-up thing like that, f'r three dollars a week

SARAH. How long they goin' t' stay?

MRS. P. She didn't say, but not long, I hope, 'r I'll be frazzled to a mere shadow. Wal, good-day. I really must be goin'. Here I stand talkin', 'n' I ain't got a minute t' spare. (*Up through gate.*) Come over when y' git time, Mis' Goodwin. I don't s'pose I'll git over here ag'in this month, 'nless I happen t' be rushin' by. I never have time t' stop a minute, y' know. (*Goes R., pauses, leans over fence.*) She wants six courses, everything separate. Did y' ever hear of sech a thing? But, then of course they pay good board. It's worth it, though, every cent. (*Looks down.*) Why, what's this? Somebuddy's dropped a package.

(*Picks up the parcel thrown down by DAVE.*)

AMOS. Somebody must 'a' lost it.

MRS. P. (*examining the package*). Here's writin' on it: "For Flora, with love from Dave." (*Comes down, hands package to SARAH.*) It's for Flora, Mis' Goodwin, from Dave Weston. I guess she didn't care much about it, droppin' it that way. (*About to go up again.*) Wal, it's about the way she's dropped him.

SARAH. What d' you mean by that, Mrs. Peasley?

MRS. P. (*up in gate, turning*). Oh, nothin'. I never have much t' say, but I have heard that Dave feels pretty sore over the way Flora's thrown him over fer Mr. Burleigh. Not that I blame her a bit—such a man as Mr. Burleigh is—but, of course, she'd encouraged Dave all along, and I s'pose it don't set very well t' be shook fer a richer and a handsomer man. Wal, I must be goin'.

(*Starts to go.*)

AMOS. Let 'em talk. Flora ain't done anything mean, 'n' she never will. It ain't in her.

SARAH. No, and I call such talk cruel—about our Flora. Why, she never ——

MRS. P. Oh, I ain't sayin' she did, 'n', 's I said b'fore, when it comes to a choice between Mr. Burleigh and Dave Weston—but then, you know how it is, folks will talk. I hate gossip, f'r my part, 'n' I'm thankful I've always made it a rule t' be careful what I say, 'n' never to repeat things. Dear me, I must hurry home 'n' git that course dinner. It must be 'most five o'clock, 'n' I ain't got a minute t' spare. Good-day.

(Exit R.)

(Enter PHILIP and FLORA, from house to porch, in time to see her. They are unnoticed by AMOS and SARAH.)

SARAH. Land, she f'rgot all about this receipt. You see, that's the way folks 'r' talkin' sayin' Flora has thrown over Dave, 'n' not treated him right. They'll say she's a flirt.

AMOS. They hadn't better, if I hear 'em. I d' know's Dave ever had any claim on her. Anyhow, if Mr. Burleigh wants her, 'n' she wants him, Dave can't expect t' keep her. A girl wants the one she wants.

SARAH. Well, you know Dave. He ain't the one t' submit when he thinks anybuddy's done wrong by him. It's my opinion he'll do somethin' desperate. (She turns, sees FLORA and PHILIP.) Land, you here? I didn't see you.

(FLORA, who has shown distress, then fear, as the meaning of her mother's words has dawned upon her, timidly attempts to move away from PHILIP, but he draws her back to him.)

AMOS. There, mother, she's heard what you said.

SARAH. Mebbe it's jest 's well if she has.

FLORA (breaking away from PHILIP and running down to c.). Mother! what do you mean? What about Dave? He—I—I don't understand.

AMOS. Never you mind, little one. It ain't anything you need t' worry about. (She goes to him; he takes her in his arms.) There, there, now, don't you think another word about it.

FLORA. It's something Mrs. Peasley said about Dave and —and me—and—(*looking timidly at PHILIP*) him.

(*AMOS comforts her, as she buries her face on his shoulder, weeping.*)

SARAH. Well, you know what a gossip Mis' Peasley is, anyway. I guess I wouldn't take it so serious.

(*PHILIP has come down to C.; AMOS and FLORA, L. C.; SARAH, R. C.*)

PHILIP. Has Mrs. Peasley, or any one dared say that I am not dealing honestly with Flora, or that she ——

SARAH. Why, no, Mr. Burleigh, of course not, only ——

AMOS. I ain't afraid t' trust my little girl t' you, Mr. Burleigh, 'n' mother ain't either. (*Enter DAVE at back; stands looking on, unnoticed.*) I've give her to y', and she's yours.

(*PHILIP draws FLORA to him; she for an instant clings to her father, then impulsively turns, with a little cry of joy, and is clasped in his arms. He kisses her. DAVE, still unseen, shows anger, starts down C., but suddenly turns and goes rapidly off to L., without looking back. PHILIP and FLORA stand C., absorbed in each other. AMOS looks at them, smiling sentimentally, then slyly draws his hand across his eyes, goes up to SARAH and attempts to caress her. She laughs, playfully repulses him, and quickly goes into the house. He follows her slowly, shaking his head and smiling happily, disappearing just as the curtain falls.*)

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE.—*Same as Act I, two days later. Discover FLORA standing by gate, looking off to L. She remains thus in silence for a moment, then DELIA enters from house, pausing on porch.*

DELIA. Oh, there you be. My, but you're glum, sence that feller of yourn went away. Didn't stay long, did he? (FLORA glances at her, but does not reply; starts to go R.) How soon's he comin' back?

FLORA (turning). I don't know. He is very busy, and hasn't been able to have the vacation he expected.

DELIA. Kind o' funny, ain't it, for a man 's rich 's he pretends t' be, t' have t' stay 'n the city and work, in the summer time? Seems t' me —

FLORA. You don't understand, Delia. It was all he could do to get away and come here for a couple of days.

DELIA. Land, but you're the lucky girl! Leastwise y' seem t' be; but y' can't 'most always sometimes exactly tell. I kind o' suspect those city fellers, the best of 'em.

FLORA. You needn't say anything to me against Mr. Burleigh, Delia, for I won't listen to you. I am going for a walk. (Starts to go R.)

DELIA. Land, I wa'n't goin' t'. I think he's just grand. But for all that, it don't seem likely t' me 't he's goin' t' stick t' a country girl what don't know a thing about society 'n' style, when he must have lots of them dressed-up city girls after him. I'd most be afraid t' put too much dependence on it, 'f I was you, f'r fear I'd be disappointed. (FLORA has paused again and is standing R.) Oh, I don't mean t' say anything ag'inst your beau, but—well, there ain't no rose, 's I've heard say, that don't have a thorn attached to it. (FLORA covers her face, weeping.) Land, if you ain't cryin'! What 've I said? (Down to R. C.)

(Enter SARAH, from house.)

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FLORA. Nothing, only—oh, I don't know. While he was here, I was so sure of him, and—but now, I—I'm almost afraid what you say is true.

SARAH. What's Delia been saying now, Flora?

DELIA. Why, not a thing, only that it ain't best always t' be too sure.

SARAH. Oh! I s'pose you was talkin' about him?

FLORA. Yes, mother. Oh, mother, do you think he really loves me?

SARAH. Why, of course. Anyway, he thinks he does. I'm kind o' like Delia, though; I wouldn't be too fast.

DELIA. That's jest it, Mis' Goodwin. You can git married in ten minutes, but once you are, you are, and there y' be. Now, there's 'Bijah Finn. As long 's he's been hangin' 'round, I can't quite make up my mind.

FLORA. I just know he loves me and is good and true. I must be crazy to let you or anybody make me doubt him for one minute. It's just because I miss him so, and—but when the mail comes and I get his letter, then I will feel better. It's nearly time, isn't it?

SARAH. Yes. 'Bijah Finn said he'd bring it along as he went by. He's goin' up t' Mis' Peasley's t' fix her clock. I guess he'll be here pretty soon. Delia, I wish you'd come in and stir up some o' that gold cake for supper. You needn't frost it.

DELIA (*going to house*). All right, Mis' Goodwin. (*In door, looking back at FLORA*.) S'pose I'll be stirrin' up wedd'n' cake b'fore long.

(*Exit.*)

SARAH (*coming down to C. ; FLORA is R.*). When did you two cal'late you'd get married?

FLORA. Oh, mother! Why, we—we didn't decide on that. He said by September, anyway, if you and father were willing. (*In confusion, about to go.*) I—I thought I'd take a little walk. My head aches, and I thought it might do it good.

SARAH. All right, I would. Don't stay too long, though.

FLORA. No. I want my letter, you know.

(*Goes off to R. I E.*)

(SARAH, who has knitting or sewing, goes and sits down on

porch, working. After a pause, enter MRS. P., hurriedly, R., down through gate.)

MRS. P. Good-afternoon, Mis' Goodwin.

SARAH. Why, Mis' Peasley, is that you?

MRS. P. Yes, what they is left of me. Don't I look like a remnant? I declare, I feel 's if I'd been pulled through a knot-hole 'n' back again. What with breakfasts at 'most noon, and "luncheon," 's she calls it, in the middle of the afternoon, 'n' course dinner 't well nigh ont' bedtime, I'm near played out. What do y' think? She wants "a la" fixin's now, 'n' I ain't the least idee what they be. Have you?

SARAH. Mebbe it's some kind of pudding. Did you look in the cook-book?

MRS. P. Yes, 'n' sent 'Lizy Bates down t' the store t' see 'f they had any, but Mr. Johnson said they must be somethin' new, he didn't have any in stock. I declare, that woman'll drive me crazy, if she stays much longer. Land, the airs she puts on would make a windmill jealous.

SARAH. How long they go'n' t' stay?

MRS. P. She ain't jest said, yet. Mr. Burleigh's gone back, y' know.

SARAH. Yes. He had t' go 'n' attend to some business.

MRS. P. Wal, I s'pose they're engaged? Flora, I mean—'n' him.

SARAH. If they are, it isn't announced yet.

MRS. P. I guess it might 's well be. I d' know how she'll take it—his mother, I mean. Flora ain't exactly their kind, 'n' they ain't no tellin' how it'll turn out.

SARAH. Wal, they's no use hirin' a rig t' go and meet trouble half way. It'll get here quick enough. I b'lieve in hopin' for the best.

MRS. P. Well, marriage is a lottery, anyway, with more blanks th'n prizes. It's f'r better 'r worse, 'n' ten t' one it's worse 'n you expected. But, then, of course, love's blind; but, goodness knows, most of 'em soon have their eyes opened.

SARAH. I hope Flora 'll be happy.

MRS. P. Land, I hope so too, 'n' I ain't sayin' but what I think she will, but it's goin' t' take a lot of love, 't seems t' me, t' get along with that stuck-up mother o'

his. (*Rises.*) Wal, I must be goin'. I ain't got a minute t' spare. I jest thought I'd run over. (*Goes up.*)

SARAH. 'Lizy Bates goin' t' stay?

MRS. P. Yes, she says she won't desert the ship. I've had t' raise her wages, though, fifty cents a week.

(SARAH *rises* ; *stands* L. C.)

SARAH. Girls ain't easy to get, nowadays. I fairly have to coax Delia Slocum to stay, sometimes, she's so anxious to go to the city and see the sights. Says she could work in a factory or a store, and be where something was going on.

MRS. P. Don't you think she'll ever take 'Bijah Finn?

SARAH. I think mebbe she will, if he waits long enough. But she says there's lots of good fish in the sea, without taking one Finn.

MRS. P. Huh! I s'pose she wants a gold fish.

SARAH. Mebbe. Anyhow, a woman ought to be able to think the man she gets is as good as gold.

MRS. P. Land, seems t' me most o' the men have got more brass th'n anything else. But I mustn't stand here gabbin'. (*Going.*) I d' know what she'll say when she hears 't I ain't got none o' them "a la's."

(*Exit to R.*)

(SARAH *is about to go into the house when DAVE enters from*
L. *She pauses as she sees him.*)

SARAH. Why, Dave, where'd you come from? Ain't you workin' t'-day?

DAVE (*in gate*). No, Mis' Goodwin, not this afternoon. I'm thinking of going away.

SARAH. Going away? Why, Dave, what for, and where to?

DAVE. Oh, I don't know—I don't care—anywhere, away from here. Somehow, I'm afraid of myself, if I stay around here, and—well, I think I'd better go away somewhere. Out West, maybe.

SARAH (*she is* L. C. ; *he comes down to* C.). I s'pose it's on account of Flora and—him. I wish you wouldn't feel that way, Dave; it ain't right. Love don't always come where it's wanted, you know, and there's times when it's our duty to make the best of things.

DAVE. I know that, Mis' Goodwin, and that's what I mean to do; but I can't do it if I stay here, where I can see her, and maybe him. If he should come back, and—and anything should happen to make me think he wasn't worthy of her, I don't dare think what I might do.

SARAH. Oh, Dave, you scare me when you talk like that. Mebbe you had better go away for a while. I feel for you, Dave, and if I had my way, it's you she'd have——

DAVE. Is it, Mis' Goodwin? Do you mean that?

SARAH. Yes, Dave, I do. To tell the truth, I ain't so sure it's going to be for the best, the way things are going. Not that I don't think he means all right by Flora, but there's his folks, the style they live in, and everything, and—well, it don't seem just natural, somehow. But, there, we mustn't talk about it any more. It only makes it all the worse for you.

DAVE. When's he coming back?

SARAH. I don't know. He's awful busy, and mebbe won't be able to come for yet a while. Flora's all upset, she misses him so, she says. She's looking for a letter; expects 'Bijah Finn with it any minute now. (*Goes to steps.*) To tell the truth, Dave, I don't b'lieve she feels so sure of him herself when he ain't here to make her. (*In door.*) I've got to see if Delia's stirring up that cake all right. (*In door.*) Won't you come in, Dave?

DAVE. No, thanks, Mis' Goodwin; I'll have to be getting along. I hope you won't think too much about what I said.

SARAH. Why, no, of course not; I know you too well to believe you'd do anything that wasn't right, Dave. But mebbe it would be jest as well if you went away for a while. They expect to get married in September; then you could come back.

(*Exit to house.*)

(DAVE, startled at her words, seems about to call her back, but changes his mind, pauses c., looking after her a moment, as if dazed, then shows anger, clenching his fist, starts up c., but pauses, comes back, takes a let-

ter from his pocket, looks at it closely, with signs of agitation.)

DAVE. From New York—from him! I won't—give—it—to—her. She'll think he didn't write, and maybe——
(Pauses, about to put the letter in his pocket, but thinks better of it. Goes toward house, calls.) Mis' Goodwin! Mis' Goodwin, here's that letter. I——

(Voices are heard off R.; he turns and looks off, starts up C., as if to get away and escape notice, but is intercepted by MRS. BURLEIGH, who enters from R., followed by GRACE BURLEIGH. He is compelled to remain, coming back down to L. C., as they see him. MRS. B. comes down to C.; GRACE remains up beyond fence, looking curiously about.)

MRS. B. I beg your pardon, but is this Mr. Goodwin's residence?

DAVE *(removing his hat, bowing politely)*. It is, ma'am.

MRS. B. I suppose you are—what they call “the hired man,” perhaps? Then——

DAVE. No, I am——

MRS. B. Will you inform Miss Goodwin—Miss Flora Goodwin—that I wish to see her? Say that Mrs. Burleigh—and Miss Grace Burleigh—have called.

DAVE. Miss Goodwin is not at home just now, ma'am. I'll call her mother, if you say so. I am Mr. Weston.

MRS. B. *(looking at him curiously, through her lorgnette)*. Oh, indeed,—Mr. Weston. I have heard Mrs. Peasley speak of you.

DAVE. Then, I dare say you know all there is to know.

MRS. B. Well, she is not chary in that respect, to be sure. At any rate, I have learned that you had a fondness—I hope you will excuse me if I speak rather plainly?

DAVE. Certainly. The plainer the better, perhaps, if there is anything to be said. Only, I must request that you grant me the same privilege.

MRS. B. *(somewhat taken aback)*. Why, to be sure, I—well, then we will come to the point at once. *(To GRACE, who stands up C., listening.)* Grace, dear, don't you think you might take a little walk, and return in a few minutes? You will find me here.

GRACE. Now, mamma, what's the use? You needn't try to conceal things from me. I understand the whole thing as well as you do, and sympathize with you perfectly. The idea of sending me away!

MRS. B. Oh, very well; I suppose you are right. (*To DAVE.*) I know this is very unusual, Mr. Weston, as we have never met before, but under the circumstances I think we may waive formality and converse freely.

DAVE. Certainly, ma'am.

MRS. B. May I be excused also if I take for granted that we understand each other perfectly in this matter?

DAVE. Well, I—I can't say that I do just understand. If you mean about your son and Flora—Miss Goodwin, I—well, I suppose we do.

MRS. B. Yes, I think we do. You must be aware of the fact that my son has been foolish enough to permit himself to become fascinated by the wiles of the farmer's pretty daughter—for I understand she is pretty——

DAVE. She is, ma'am, and as good and true as she is pretty. I don't think "wiles" is just the word. She is not that kind of girl.

GRACE. But, Mr. Weston, I am sure you know what my mother means. My brother is so susceptible to feminine charms, and——

MRS. B. Grace! I must insist that you do not address Mr. Weston. You have not been introduced, and it is most irregular.

GRACE. I don't see how—with him. Besides, you haven't been introduced either.

DAVE (*politely, but with some sarcasm to MRS. B., as he is about to go*). Excuse me, but I hope you will remember that any of this "irregularity" is not of my seeking. Perhaps we'd better wait for an introduction.

GRACE (*smilingly, to herself*). That's a good one.

MRS. B. Mr. Weston, you will oblige me by remaining and hearing what I have to say. (*He pauses, coming back.*) As I remarked before, we will waive all formality and come at once to the point. There is nothing I desire so much as to break off this foolish match between my son and Miss—Goodwin, I believe is her name. Am I justified in believing that you are anxious for the same thing to happen?

DAVE. No. I wish to see her happy. If she loves your

son, and he loves her and is worthy of her, I wouldn't want to see the match broken off. Why should I?

GRACE. Of course, mother; why should he?

MRS. B. Grace! (*To DAVE.*) "Worthy of her," you say—my son! But, then, of course, we look at these things from a different standpoint. You say you wish only to see her happy. Well, then, you cannot possibly wish to see her married to my son. It could not mean happiness for her, nor for him. However, we will consider only her. My son is a man of the world, he meets the most brilliant, cultivated women, those who have wealth, position, all that is necessary to recognition in our world—a world in which she would be entirely out of place.

DAVE. Seems to me Flora couldn't be out of place anywhere.

MRS. B. But you, too, are unused to the ways of the world. Do you think my son's love—or infatuation—could last, when she was brought into direct comparison with the sort of women he is accustomed to know?

DAVE. Perhaps the sort of women he is accustomed to know ain't the sort that would bear comparison with her.

MRS. B. Sir! I did not expect to be insulted. I will not submit to it.

DAVE. I beg your pardon, ma'am, but I didn't mean to insult you, any more than you intended to insult her by what you said. (*About to go.*) I guess there isn't much more to be said on the subject, so I'll ask you to excuse me.

(*He has been L., now crosses to R., about to exit.* MRS. B. is C., GRACE up L. C., beyond fence.)

MRS. B. One minute, please. I think there is something more to be said. You seem to be looking out for Miss Goodwin's happiness; then you will do all you can to prevent her becoming the wife of Philip Burleigh.

DAVE (*pausing, R.*). What do you mean?

MRS. B. I mean that—well, what if he had to do something to injure another woman, in order to win her? What if he were only using her for a plaything, as a passing fancy, and wouldn't hesitate to throw her over,

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as he has others, perhaps, when another pretty face that pleases him came along?

GRACE. Mother! How can you?

MRS. B. Be still. This does not concern you.

GRACE. But, mother——

MRS. B. (*to DAVE, who has stood staring at her, as if dazed*). Well, sir, what then?

DAVE. What then? Why, if he treated her like that—if I had proof that he is that sort of man, and has only been playing with her—then—why, then, he would have to answer to me.

MRS. B. (*alarmed*). To you? What do you mean? What would you do?

DAVE. What should I do to a man like that, who isn't fit to live? Do? I'd kill him, that's what I'd do!

(Turns and exits R., rapidly, without looking back.)

MRS. B. (*thoroughly frightened*). I believe he means it. Oh, what have I done? (*Starts R.*) No, no, come back. It isn't true! He isn't that kind. (*Comes back, in dismay.*) Oh, dear, oh, dear, there is no saying what the crazy fellow will do. Oh, I shall faint!

GRACE (*coming down, hurriedly, assisting her*). Mother, how could you talk so about Phil? Why, if he knew it, he would never forgive you.

MRS. B. But he mustn't know. Don't you ever breathe a word of it. I meant it only for his good, and—oh, dear, I really do feel faint!

(Enter DELIA, from house, with her sleeves rolled up.)

DELIA. What's the matter? Anybody—— (*Sees them and is overcome with awe.*) Oh, my! You must be Mis' Peasley's stylish boarders, ain't y'?

GRACE. We are Mrs. Peasley's boarders, yes. But never mind who we are; get some water, please; my mother is faint.

(Exit DELIA to house.)

MRS. B. There, there, never mind, I am all right. It was only for a moment. I never thought he would take it that way.

GRACE. It seems to me he wouldn't be much of a man if he took it any other way.

MRS. B. Grace! Sometimes I almost think you are beginning to share Phil's too democratic ideas of things. I suppose you would like to see him married to that girl?

GRACE. No, I wouldn't. But I expect to see it if you are not a little more diplomatic.

(DELIA rushes in with a glass of water down to MRS. B., thrusting it into her face.)

DELIA. Here y' are. Sorry t' be so long, but I waited t' pump some fresh.

MRS. B. No, no, thanks, I don't need it now. Take it away. (*Looks to see if any has been spilled upon her.*)

DELIA. Got over it, have y'? (*Takes hold of her dress and looks at it, feeling of the goods.*) Hope I didn't git none on that nice dress. (*She stands so that she can see off L.; sees 'BIJAH coming.*) Here comes Mr. Finn. (*MRS. B. is R., GRACE L. C., DELIA up L. 'BIJAH comes in, whistling, looking down, not noticing the others; comes down through gate. DELIA goes to him, takes him by the arm and pulls him to one side.*) 'Bijah Finn, you deaf, dumb 'n' blind? Look who's here.

'BIJAH (*looking up*). Who? (*Sees MRS. B. and GRACE.*) Gosh! Some o' them big-bugs!

MRS. B. (*with a haughty glance at 'BIJAH, then ignoring him.*) Come, Grace, we will be going. (*To DELIA.*) I called to see Miss Goodwin, but as she is not at home —

DELIA. She is at home, ma'am. Leastwise, she can't be fur off. Her ma's in the house.

MRS. B. I wished to see Miss Goodwin alone.

'BIJAH. Wal, guess I'll be gitt'n' along. (*To MRS. B.*) Don't s'pose y' got nothin' y' want done?

GRACE. Done?

'BIJAH. Mended 'r fixed, miss, 'r anything like that. I can do a fust-class job, whatever it is, fr'm pullin' a tooth t' fixin' a mowin' machine.

GRACE (*laughing*). Well, I don't happen to have any teeth that need fixing, and I don't own such a thing as a mowing machine, so I do not need your services.

MRS. B. Grace, come with me, this instant. (*Goes off L.*)

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GRACE (*to 'BIJAH, close to him*). But I'll remember you, if I do. (*Laughs and follows MRS. B. off L.*)

'BIJAH (*looking after her, admiringly*). Gosh, but she's purty. Real nice, too, ain't she?

DELIA. Oh, I s'pose you're all took up with her, the way Flora Goodwin is with her brother.

'BIJAH. Oh, that's who it is, is it?

DELIA. Yes, it is; it's his mother 'n' sister. I s'pose I ain't in it any more. But y' needn't think I care, 'Bijah Finn.

'BIJAH. Huh! 'tain't style I'm after, n'r beauty. I'd rather have you, any day.

DELIA. Thanks. Glad t' suit. But you don't suit me. See? (*Moves over to steps.*) It's a city feller I'm after, 'r none. If you don't want style 'n' beauty, I do, 'n' that bars you out.

(*Exits to house, laughing disdainfully.*)

'BIJAH (*looking after her*). Huh! Guess I put m' foot in it, that time.

(*Enter AMOS, R.*)

AMOS. Hello, 'Bijah. What job y' doin' t'-day?

'BIJAH (*turning*). Oh, how are y', Mr. Goodwin? 'S jest goin' over t' Mis' Peasley's t' mend her clock. Was t' 've done it b'fore, but got a job t' tune the church organ, 'n' had t' put Mis' Peasley off. Say, them hifalutin women what board with her was jest here. Ain't they the limit f'r style?

AMOS. Here, was they? Wonder what they wanted.

'BIJAH. Wanted t' see your Flora. Guess they'll be back. They jest walked up there a ways. (*Goes up to gate.*) Wal, I'll have t' git along over t' Mis' Peasley's. She'll have a fit 'f I don't git her clock mended so 't it'll go, seein' she don't never have a minute t' spare. (*Goes.*)

AMOS (*calling after him*). Say, 'Bijah, wa'n't they any mail for us?

'BIJAH. No, they wa'n't. I looked in your box, but they wa'n't none.

(*Exit to R.*)

(*AMOS is about to go into house when FLORA enters R. I E.*)

FLORA. Father.

AMOS (*turning, on steps*). Oh, that you, little girl? Been for a walk?

FLORA. Yes. And, oh, father, I just met Mr. Finn, and he said there was no letter for me. What do you suppose is the reason?

AMOS (*down to C., near her*). Mebbe it got lost, 'r delayed. I wouldn't let it worry me. It's all right.

FLORA. But I should have had one yesterday, and now there is none to-day. I don't believe he wrote one. Oh, yes, I know he is busy, but that shouldn't make any difference. If he loved me as he pretended to, and thought of me as I do of him, he would neglect anything—everything—rather than disappoint me.

AMOS (*with his arm about her*). There, there, now, don't you go to imaginin' things. I guess he didn't have t' come here all the way from New York jest t' see you, 'f he didn't love you 'n' mean it.

FLORA. Yes, he is good and true, I am sure of it, but—but—I am afraid of it all. It seems as if I don't dare believe in my own happiness. Something tells me it is too great to last, and that it will soon come to an end, like a beautiful dream.

AMOS. Come, now, don't you be so silly. It ain't treatin' him right t' think such things. You may be sorry for it, yet.

FLORA. I'm sorry already, and I won't be so foolish any more. I'll just be happy, for I know he loves me, and—oh, father, how I love him!

AMOS. Of course y' do, and that's right. (*Caressing her.*) There, now, it's all right, and we ain't goin' t' fret another bit. Better come in the house now. It's 'most supper time. (*Up steps.*)

FLORA. All right, father. I'll be in in a minute. (*Goes up to gate; he goes into house. She stands looking off to R., then turns and looks L., starts, comes a short way down C., to L. C.*) Oh!—it is his mother—and his sister—and they are here. I don't want to meet them, I ——

(*She crosses to L., starts to go up steps, but is compelled to pause, as MRS. B. enters L., down through gate. She is followed by GRACE, who pauses up C.*)

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MRS. B. I beg your pardon. Miss Goodwin, is it not?

FLORA (*coming down steps*). Yes.

MRS. B. I am Mrs. Burleigh, and this is my daughter.

(FLORA *bows*; GRACE *impulsively starts to come down, as if to shake hands with her.*)

GRACE. How do you do? I am glad —

MRS. B. (*stepping between them*). Grace, you will be kind enough to walk on. I wish to speak with Miss Goodwin alone.

GRACE. Very well, mother; but I don't see — (*Looks at MRS. B., who gives her a severe glance.*) Yes, I'm going. (*To FLORA, as she goes up.*) Good-afternoon, Miss Goodwin. I hope to see you again, soon.

(*Exit to R.* FLORA *smiles faintly, with a polite recognition of her remarks.*)

(MRS. B. *is C.*; FLORA, L. C., *near porch.*)

MRS. B. My son has spoken of you so often, Miss Goodwin, that I feel as if we were already acquainted.

FLORA (*somewhat confused*). I—I am very glad to meet you, Mrs. Burleigh. Of course, Mr. Burleigh—Philip—has told you —

MRS. B. Yes, he has told me, Miss Goodwin. I can readily understand how you have so easily become fascinated and dazzled by such an opportunity as his friendship seems to offer, but I feel that it is my duty, as his mother and one who wishes to prove herself a friend to you, to warn you.

FLORA. Warn me? Of what—against what? I don't understand.

MRS. B. I trust you will pardon me if I seem to speak plainly. I do what I know to be for the best. My dear, you are deluding yourself. You must know that my son can never make you his wife; that, in his heart, he has no intentions of doing so.

FLORA. I will not believe that. He is too good, too true, to deceive me. How can you, his own mother, think him capable of such a thing?

MRS. B. Because, my dear Miss Goodwin, I know the world—life—men. I am sure you will agree with me, if you will look at the subject calmly, sensibly. Look

beyond the present, supposing he did mean it, and you became his wife. Suppose he does love you, in a way, because you are pretty, demure and sweet. But you are a country girl, with no idea of city life. What would you do as the wife of a rich city gentleman, such as my son? Think of yourself as the mistress of a house in which even the servants would know more about society and the ways of the world than you. Your husband at first might love you, but how long would it last? Three months—six—a year, even. And then there would come a change. It would be but the inevitable result of such an unequal marriage. Believe me, my dear, it could mean but chagrin, disappointment for him; unhappiness, misery, even despair, for you.

FLORA (*who has hung her head, covering her face with her hands*). I feel that you are right—I have felt it, often. I have said the same things to Philip, but he would not listen to me. He says he loves me, that he will love and protect me always, that—oh, I don't know what to do, what to think! (*Covers her face, weeping.*)

MRS. B. You say you love my son, that you wish to make him happy?

FLORA. Yes, yes, I do love him. I would do anything to make him happy.

MRS. B. There is but one thing that you can do.

FLORA. And that is ——

MRS. B. To give him up.

FLORA. You don't know what you ask. No, no, I cannot do that.

MRS. B. So! You do not love him, after all. It is only of yourself you are thinking. That is not real love, Miss Goodwin; it is selfishness. If you wish to prove your love for my son, write him a letter, at once, telling him that you will not be his wife, that you can never see him again.

FLORA. I could write the letter, Mrs. Burleigh; I could tell him that, but he would not take me at my word. Your reasons are not new. He has persuaded me against them all. I might be willing to sacrifice myself, but what about his sacrifice in giving me up? What if he loves me too well to make that sacrifice?

MRS. B. Keep him at a distance for a time, and his in-

fatuation—for that is all it is—will wear off. You may flatter yourself it is love; I know it is not. You can end it, if you will.

FLORA (*she has become bolder and speaks with more assurance*). I want to do what is right, Mrs. Burleigh, and I want to prove that my love for Philip is sincere and unselfish. But I cannot do what you ask.

MRS. B. Very well. I had thought to spare you, to make it easier. I see, however, that you must hear something I hoped I should not be obliged to tell you. But you must not blame me. You have brought it upon yourself.

FLORA. Why, what is it? What—do—you mean?

MRS. B. (*taking a letter from her hand-bag*). Miss Goodwin, I said I had hoped to spare you; I wished also to spare myself, for it pains me to say what I have to say as much as it will you to hear it. But it must be said, for your sake.

FLORA. What do you mean?

MRS. B. I mean this: My son, as I have said before, is a man of the world. He is a man who attracts women, and you cannot be foolish enough to think you are the first woman he has attracted. What if I tell you that there have been others—are others—who have heard the same words he has spoken to you, who love him, and who believe that he loves them and is true to them alone?

FLORA (*facing her proudly*). Mrs. Burleigh, even if you, his own mother, told me that, I would not believe it.

MRS. B. And I would not expect you to do so, on my word alone. (*Shows her a part of letter.*) Miss Goodwin, do you recognize that handwriting?

FLORA. It is Philip's.

MRS. B. Look closely. You are sure it is his?

FLORA. Yes, Mrs. Burleigh.

MRS. B. Very well. Then listen to these words. (*Reads.*) "Surely, mother, she is not foolish enough to think I ever meant to marry her. Of course, I paid her some attention, and her own foolishness may have led her to think that I was in earnest. If she took it too much to heart, I am sorry, as I was only amusing myself, but she will get over it ——"

FLORA. It cannot be. He is not such a man as that.

MRS. B. My dear, you do not know men—men who live in the world, who are fascinating, rich, and who admire women of their own sphere, who seek their admiration. It is an old story, but in hearing it now, you are sparing yourself much suffering in the future.

FLORA. But it is not true. He did not write those words—he didn't refer to me. Tell me—it isn't true.

MRS. B. Your own heart tells you that it is true. Now will you write that letter?

FLORA. You tell me it is true—that he meant me?

MRS. B. Whom else? Could I tell you, expose my own son's insincerity, if it were not? Do you imagine it causes me no suffering to acknowledge his fault, even to save you?

FLORA. Then he does not love me, I am nothing to him. He has deceived me, and I—— (*With sudden dignity and determination.*) Let me see that letter. If he wrote those words, and they refer to me, I will never see him again.

(*She seems to have lost all her awe of MRS. B., goes to her and demands the letter. MRS. B. shows her the page, but does not release her hold on the paper.*)

MRS. B. See? there it is, your name—Flora Goodwin.

FLORA. Yes, yes, I see it—my name. It is true—true! How dare he do such a thing? Does he think I am a fool, a plaything, to amuse him for a little while and then be cast aside, when he is ready to go back to his grand ladies?

MRS. B. (*overjoyed, but cleverly concealing her satisfaction.*) You will write to him, telling him that you wish never to see him again?

FLORA. Yes.

MRS. B. But you must never let him know what has passed between us, what I have told you. For my sake, who have tried to save you, you must not.

FLORA. He shall never know it from me.

MRS. B. You promise?

FLORA (*in desperation*). Yes, I promise anything you wish. Only go, leave me; I can't stand any more.

(*She turns away, going toward house, burying her face in hands. MRS. B. goes up, with a look of triumph at*

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FLORA, *who does not notice her, as she goes out to L. As she disappears, FLORA sinks down on steps, sobbing. After a slight pause, DAVE enters R. He has a letter in his hand. He sees FLORA, advances, as if about to offer her the letter, then changes his mind and holds it behind him.*)

DAVE. Flora.

FLORA (*looking up, then rising, glancing at him irresolutely, suddenly bursting out*). Oh, Dave, Dave, he is a villain, he doesn't love me; he was only amusing himself with me, and I shall never see him again.

DAVE. Why, Flora, what do you mean? What has he done? How do you know?

FLORA. Never mind; I do know, and I am through with him. He didn't write, as he promised, and—oh, I can't tell you, but I know—I know! (*DAVE slips the letter into his pocket.*) Oh, Dave, can you forgive me, can you still love me, as you said you did? If you can ———

DAVE. Flora! You mean ———

FLORA. Yes, Dave, yes. You are good, you are true; I can trust you, and I want you to take me. Can you, Dave,—will you?

DAVE. Flora,—do you mean it? You love me, you will be mine?

FLORA. I will be yours—you shall make me love you—you are worthy of me and I—oh, Dave! Dave!

(*She breaks down, crying hysterically; he takes her in his arms, embracing her tenderly, her head on his shoulder.*)

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE.—*Parlor or reception-room in the Burleigh residence, New York; an elegant apartment, beautifully furnished. It is late in the afternoon. Discover GRACE, seated on sofa L., with her feet on a chair, reading. THOMPSON stands C., stiffly, looking straight ahead.*

GRACE (*after a pause, looking up from her book*). Well, Thompson?

THOMPSON. I beg pardon, miss, but I was sent to remind you that it is nearly six, miss, and time to dress for dinner.

GRACE. Oh, all right. Just as soon as I finish this chapter. Seems so I never have any peace. It's always dress for this, or for that, or get fixed up for something or other. (*She notices that he is looking at her feet.*) Goodness me, Thompson, what are you looking at—my feet? I suppose you're shocked?

THOMPSON. I was only thinking, miss, that if Mrs. Burleigh——

GRACE. Oh, yes, I'd catch it—I know. But don't you mind. I declare, I get so sick and tired of being elegant and proper all the time, that sometimes I'm tempted to do something dreadful to relieve the monotony. But you needn't look so horrified, Thompson, I don't intend to do it just yet. You may go now.

THOMPSON. Yes, miss. (*Goes up.*)

GRACE. Oh, Thompson; how is my brother to-day?

THOMPSON. Much better, miss. He was out for a ride this afternoon, and has been lying down since his return. He informed me that he would be down to dinner, miss.

GRACE. That's good.

(*Enter PHILIP, R., in evening dress. He is rather pale and seems somewhat weak.*)

THOMPSON. Here he is now, miss.

(*Goes to PHILIP and offers to assist him.*)

PHILIP. No, thank you, Thompson. I'm all right. Hello, sis,—here's your big brother, almost like himself again.

(*Exit THOMPSON, C. D. L.*)

GRACE (*throwing down her book and jumping up*). How glad I am, Phil, dear. (*Puts up her arms; he kisses her.*) You don't know how lonesome it has been, with you ill all this time.

PHILIP (*sitting R. C.*). Maybe it hasn't been hard for me, lying there in bed, when there was so much to do and so many things to worry about.

GRACE. I suppose you are unhappy, Phil, dear, about—well, I don't like to mention it, but you know what I mean.

PHILIP. You may mention it, little one. In fact, it is the very thing I want to talk about with you. It is a great mystery to me, you know, and I want you to tell me just what happened while you were there, and what reason you think she had for breaking our engagement and refusing to have anything more to do with me. There is something that I know nothing about, and we must get at the bottom of it, Grace, you and I.

(*She stands behind his chair, leaning over, with her arms around his neck.*)

GRACE. I'm afraid I can't help you much, you poor boy. I saw very little of Miss Goodwin and did not hold any conversation with her. But mother——

PHILIP. Ah, but mother—Grace, perhaps I ought not to say it, or even think it, but I can't help believing that mother was the cause of it all. You know, she was very much against my marriage with Miss Goodwin, and could not give up hoping that I would make Helen Blake my wife.

GRACE (*sitting on floor or stool at his feet, with her arms on his knee*). I don't blame you for not wanting to marry Helen Blake. I can't bear her. But you know how she has run after you, and tried to make people think you were going to get married, and mother helped it along. I'd ten times rather have you marry Flora Goodwin, if she isn't anything but a country girl.

PHILIP. Thank you, dear. (*Stoops and kisses her.*) But such a dear, sweet little country girl, and all the better

for being what she is. Why, in comparison to Helen Blake—but there is no comparison.

GRACE. I should say not, such a flirt as she is. She's always after some man, and when it comes to such a catch as you are, I guess she wasn't going to lose a trick if she could help it. Of course, she's good family, and in our set, and all that, with money of her own, so mother's crazy for you to have her. But I don't blame you for rebelling, Phil. I would, too.

PHILIP. But that doesn't explain why Flora wrote me that letter, saying she would never see me again, and then returned all my letters unopened. If I had been able to go there at once, it might have been different, but overwork and the heat played me out, and here I have been sick for weeks, with not even the strength to write a letter. Ah, but fate plays a fellow some mean tricks!

GRACE. Yes, Phil; but somebody generally helps fate along. (*Looks about, cautiously.*) I don't suppose I ought to say it—mother would just about kill me,—but—well, I really do lay it to her. I saw enough to make me think she is at the bottom of the whole thing. I am so sorry, Phil, dear,—about it all. Don't you think you will ever—m'm—fix it up?

PHILIP (*as they go up c.*). I shall try. There has been some misunderstanding, and if mother—well, let us hope it is not too late. By the way, I saw somebody from there to-day.

GRACE. Why, Phil, who?

PHILIP. Do you remember Mr. Finn?

GRACE. Mr. Finn. M'm—let me see: Mr. Finn. Why, wasn't he the man who could do so many different things?

PHILIP. The very man. Well, I saw him and his wife.

GRACE. His wife?

PHILIP. Yes. They are on their honeymoon—just married—and when I went into the store to-day, for the first time in weeks, who should I run into but them? They'll be here to dinner.

GRACE. Phil! to dinner? Have you told mother?

PHILIP. No. I thought it would be safer to take her by surprise. I don't know as she'll fancy having 'Bijah Finn and his wife, who was Delia Slocum, Mr. Goodwin's "hired girl," visit us.

GRACE. Mercy, no! You're in for it. I don't see how you ever dared do such a thing. Mother will raise an awful row.

PHILIP. I guess she'll survive. I had to have a little pleasure, after being shut up so long, and I thought it would be a real treat to give Mr. and Mrs. Finn a good time. Will you help me, dear?

GRACE. Of course I will, and love to, unless mother——

PHILIP. Oh, you leave her to me. Hurry up, now, and get dressed. They may be here any minute, and I want you to be as nice to them as you can. We must show them what real life in New York is like.

GRACE. All right. It'll be heaps of fun. Only, mother——

PHILIP. There, there, little 'fraid-cat, run along. I'll take the whipping.

GRACE (*about to go, looks off to R.*). Oh! Be careful, Phil; here she is now.

(*She runs off, C. D. R., as MRS. B., in an elaborate dinner-gown, enters R. PHILIP is L. C.; she comes to C.*)

MRS. B. Ah, here you are, Phil. How delightful to have you about again.

PHILIP. Yes, mother, it is very delightful to me. My illness has been a great trial, though I have tried to bear it patiently. It has robbed me of that which made life most dear.

MRS. B. Why, yes, Philip, of course, it—it has seriously interfered with your business, and with our vacation plans, but I doubt if it has resulted in any great loss.

PHILIP. It is not a financial loss to which I referred. Money is not everything in this world, nor is name, position, or success of any kind. There is such a thing as love, mother, and life is not worth living when one loses that which he loves most dearly.

(*They are sitting, she R., he L. C.*)

MRS. B. Why, of course, and I—I hope to see you made very happy by love and——

PHILIP. I was in love, I was happy, I thought I had all that life needed to make my happiness complete, and then, all at once, while I was lying sick and helpless, it was taken from me.

MRS. B. (*rising*). Philip, how foolishly you talk. I am sure all that has happened is for the best, and will prove to be for your happiness.

PHILIP (*rising and going to her*). Mother, do you really believe that?

MRS. B. (*trying to avoid him, about to go up c.*). Why, of course I do. It is nearly time dinner was served. I must go.

PHILIP. No; stay here, please, and listen to me.

MRS. B. What do you mean?

PHILIP. I mean, mother, that I think it is time we had a serious talk and came to an understanding. Sit down, please.

MRS. B. But I—— (*He motions to a chair, c.; she looks at him as if puzzled, half frightened, and sits.*) I'm sure, Philip, I don't see why you should act like this. I hope your illness has not affected your brain.

PHILIP (*going to other side of table, R., sitting, and leaning over it with his arms across table, looking straight at her*). Mother, I am going to ask you a question. I want you to answer it truthfully.

MRS. B. My son!

PHILIP. Pardon me; I mean candidly. I do not wish to be disrespectful, nor to seem severe, but there are times when a man has a right to demand the truth, even from his own mother.

MRS. B. Philip! Do you mean to say that I have ever told you anything but the truth?

PHILIP. No, mother, by no means; but I mean that what I want now is the truth—the facts, rather, without concealment. What I wish to know is this: Did you see Flora Goodwin after I left Mapleville?

MRS. B. Why—yes; I believe I saw her once or twice.

PHILIP. You called to see her?

MRS. B. I was passing the place and—stopped in.

PHILIP. And you saw her alone?

MRS. B. N-no—Grace was with me.

PHILIP. But not all the time. Did you not see Miss Goodwin alone?

MRS. B. Perhaps so, for a very few minutes. Really, Philip, you must excuse me. It is nearly time for dinner, and I have no more time to spare.

(*Rises, about to go.*)

PHILIP (*rising*). Wait, please. I have one more question to ask you. It is this—did you do or say anything to influence Flora Goodwin against me—to cause her to give me up?

MRS. B. Philip! you are going too far. I refuse to submit to any more of this cross questioning. You seem to forget that I am your mother, and that you have no right to speak to me like this.

PHILIP. No, I do not forget that you are my mother, neither do I forget that I am a man, and that no one, not even my mother, has a right to interfere and take from me that which is dearest in life. Forgive me, if I seem severe or accuse you wrongfully, but I am convinced that you have done this cruel thing. Now, there is one thing more for you to do.

MRS. B. How dare you say such things to me—you, my son? To think that you should make me the subject of such accusations, such indignities. If you have no love for me, where is your filial respect, your common courtesy?

(She is about to exit c., but PHILIP has gone up and now bars her way.)

PHILIP. One thing, mother. You must go to Flora Goodwin, retract all you said to her and tell her that there is no reason why she may not become my wife.

MRS. B. Never! Are you crazy? Never—never would I so humiliate myself! I think we have nothing more to say.

PHILIP. But I have this to say—unless you do this—unless you do all in your power to undo what you have done, I shall leave your home and be no longer your son.

MRS. B. You—you mean —— *(At first appearing to be frightened at his words, but recovering herself.)* If you think to coerce me by threats, you will find it useless. If you have not lost your mind, you must realize that what you are saying is most ridiculous.

PHILIP. What I say I mean, and you know me well enough to know that I will abide by it. Take your choice.

MRS. B. Philip ——

(She now begins to realize that she has gone too far, and

stops, looking at him intently, as if in hopes of seeing him relent. He turns from her and goes down to R. C. She is about to go to him, stretching out her hands pleadingly, when THOMPSON enters C. D. L. As he speaks, MRS. B. pauses and turns to him. PHILIP does not look around.)

THOMPSON. I beg pardon.

MRS. B. Well, Thompson?

THOMPSON. There are callers, ma'am.

MRS. B. Callers? At this time of day? Who are they?

THOMPSON. It was Mr. Burleigh they asked for. They seem to be from the country. "Finn," I think, is the name.

MRS. B. Finn? To see you, Philip?

PHILIP. Yes. It is 'Bijah Finn and his bride, from Maple-ville. I believe they are on their wedding tour.

MRS. B. But what are they doing here—in our house?

PHILIP. Why, I ran across them down-town this afternoon and asked them to come and visit us. Bring them right up, Thompson.

THOMPSON. Yes, sir.

(Exit, C. D. L.)

MRS. B. Philip, how could you? I remember now—that terrible, uncouth creature who came to mend Mrs. Peasley's clock? And who is his bride, pray?

PHILIP. Why, she was Miss Delia Slocum, Mr. Goodwin's hired girl.

MRS. B. Hired girl! Here—to stay with us! Really, Philip, you go too far. I cannot consent to have those people here, to humiliate me before the servants. Fortunately, we have no guests, but I—no, you must tell them that it is not convenient for us to entertain them.

PHILIP. But it is, quite convenient, I am sure.

(She turns away haughtily, going down R.; he goes up to C. D., meets DELIA, who enters from L.)

DELIA. Here we are, Mr. Burleigh, safe and sound. Lucky, I guess, considerin'.

PHILIP *(shaking hands with her, cordially)*. Glad to see you, Miss Slocum.

DELIA. Slocum?

PHILIP. Pardon me. I mean "Mrs. Finn," to be sure.
Where's your husband?

DELIA (*looking off*). Here he comes. (*Enter 'BIJAH.*)
'Bijah, here's Mr. Burleigh.

'BIJAH. How d' do? Glad t' see y'.

(*He and PHILIP shake hands.*)

PHILIP. And I am glad to see you, Mr. Finn. So glad I happened to run across you.

'BIJAH. So 'm I. You ain't th' only one. Seems t' me half the folks in New York tried t' run across us, the way we had t' dodge. Great place, ain't it?

PHILIP. Yes, New York is quite a village. Come, I want you to meet my mother. Mother!

(*He goes down, so that MRS. B. is compelled to turn and notice them. DELIA, who has been up stage, looking about, now comes down.*)

'BIJAH (*going up to MRS. B. and offering his hand*). How d' do? Glad t' meet y', mum. (*She ignores him, after a slight bow. He looks surprised, but motions to DELIA to come to him, which she does.*) Let me interduce my wife, Mrs. Finn. I guess you've seen her b'fore, there 't Goodwin's, where she used t' work.

MRS. B. (*bowing, very coldly*). How do you do?

DELIA. Pretty well, thank y'. Guess you ain't none too glad t' see us, leastwise, y' ain't jumpin' f'r joy. Wal, I s'pose 'tis a bother, havin' folks come in so, jest at meal time. But I don't want y' t' make a difference f'r us. Jest whatever y' happen t' have 's good enough for us. Ain't it, 'Bijah?

'BIJAH. Sure, it is. Don't go t' no trouble f'r us, ma'am, even if we be a newly-married bridal couple on our wedd'n' tower. We don't wish t' make no trouble, 'n' b'sides (*taking a small kit of tools from his pocket*) I brought some tools along, so 'f they's anything y' want fixed, why, jest trot it out. Got anything out of order?

MRS. B. No, thank you, I have not.

'BIJAH. Don't make no difference what 'tis, I cal'late I c'n fix it—from mending some o' y'r fancy bricky-bracky

to fixin' y'r kitchen pump. Jest 's lieves 's not, ma'am, and it 'd kind o' make me feel 's if we was a-payin' our way.

DELIA. Land, 'Bijah, ain't you got no sense? I guess sech rich folks 's they be don't want no pay, when we're invited. (*To MRS. B.*) You must excuse him, ma'am, but he means well. I s'pose you wonder how I happened t' take him, after hangin' off s' long —

MRS. B. (*going up, very haughtily*). Really, I have never given the subject a thought.

DELIA. Wal, y' see, he pestered me most t' death, poppin' the question every time we met, 'n' I jest had t' take him t' get red of him. Of course, I meant t' have him all the time, but it don't do t' let a man know you're too willin'. Does it, ma'am?

MRS. B. (*in C. D.*). I beg you will excuse me from further conversation.

(*Exit.*)

DELIA. M-my! ain't she frigid?

'BIJAH. Wal, I d' know—I guess we ain't jest her style.

PHILIP (*who has appeared slightly annoyed, but assuming a cheerful mood*). Never mind. Sit down, and tell me all about your trip. About your wedding, rather, and things at Mapleville.

(*'BIJAH and DELIA sit on sofa, L. ; PHILIP C.*)

'BIJAH. Wal, y' see, I won her. Guess, after doin' s' many jobs, 'n' doin' 'em well, I wa'n't go'n' t' fall up on a little thing like gitt'n' a wife.

DELIA. I guess it wa'n't so easy, when y' come right down to it. I guess you've had easier jobs. Y' see, Mr. Burleigh, it was this way: 'Bijah said he'd bring me to the city 'n' all, 'f I'd have him, and that was an inducement 't I couldn't hold out ag'instant. So I took him, 'n' here we be.

'BIJAH. But it's permanent, Delia. I ain't go'n' t' be shook.

DELIA. I guess I know that. I'm willin' t' make the best of it. We're goin' t' keep house, when we git back t' Mapleville. We've took the Spencer place, right next t' Goodwin's.

PHILIP. Is that so? The place with the red barns?

'BIJAH. That's it. Kind o' run down, but I mean t' fix it up. Y' know, I'm pretty handy.

(*'BIJAH rises as he speaks and goes over to clock on mantel, R. He takes out his tools and tightens up a screw or two in the clock. During following conversation he walks about room handling furniture, etc., and showing by his motions that he finds loose parts that should be repaired, etc.*)

PHILIP. Yes, I know. But, tell me—how are things at—
at Mr. Goodwin's?

'BIJAH. Go'n' t' be a wedd'n' there this fall.

PHILIP. A wedding? Why, who ——

DELIA. Land, 'Bijah, ain't you got no sense, blurtin' it right out, like that? Can't y' see it's a shock to him? It's Flora, Mr. Burleigh, and Dave Weston.

PHILIP (*rising*). She—she is going to marry him?

DELIA. Yes, she is. Y' see, she —— Wal, the fact is, folks said you'd only been amusin' y'rself with her, 'n' threw her over, 'n' something made her believe it, and so she took Dave. Y' know, they'd been as good 's engaged b'fore you come along, so folks said, 'n' they thought it was real noble of Dave t' be willin' t' take her back, after she'd been treated the way she had, and the way she'd treated him. But I never believed it of y', never, n'r 'Bijah didn't. Did y', 'Bijah?

'BIJAH. No, I didn't. I always said they was some mistake, 'n' 't you'd ought t' had a chance t' explain. But Flora stuck to it 't she had proofs—seen 'em with her own eyes, she said, 'n' Dave swore he'd kill you 'f you ever come 'round there ag'in, 'n' so they give it out that they was engaged.

PHILIP. My friends, I wish to thank you for saying that you believe in me. There has been a mistake—a terrible mistake. I wrote to Miss Goodwin several times, but my letters came back unopened. I was ill for several weeks, and have not been able to take the journey or I should have gone to her and demanded the truth.

'BIJAH (*rising and giving PHILIP his hand*). I do believe y', Mr. Burleigh, 'n' I always did.

DELIA (*following his example*). And so do I.

PHILIP. Thank you.

(Enter GRACE, C. D. R., in a handsome evening dress.)

GRACE. Oh, how do you do? Mr. and Mrs. Finn, I believe?

'BIJAH. That's us.

GRACE (*shaking hands with them, cordially*). How nice of you to come and see us. I hope you are having a pleasant time in New York?

DELIA. If we ain't, it ain't Mr. Finn's fault, I'll say that for him. I declare, he don't seem t' care how much he spends.

'BIJAH. Wal, a feller don't git married every day.

PHILIP. That's the way to look at it.

DELIA. I s'pose it is, but he jest wants t' take in everything, 'n' I tell him he ain't made of money. (*To GRACE.*) Excuse me, but that's an awful pretty dress you've got on.

GRACE (*smiling*). Do you like it?

DELIA. I should say so. I suppose you had a dressmaker make it?

GRACE. Yes.

DELIA. For my part, I make all my own. Mis' Peasley goes out sewin' in the winter time, when she ain't got no boarders, and she's a real good hand, but I call it extravagant payin' a dollar 'n' a half a day f'r what you can do y'rself. But, then, you can afford it. I made this one, 'n' the one I was married in, too. Everybuddy said it looked real nice, though Mis' Peasley, of course, said she could 'a' give me a better fit. But I told 'Bijah it was me he was marryin', not what I had on, 'n' 'f he didn't like me the way I was, he could git somebuddy else. I thought it looked real nice, though, and wa'n't a mite ashamed of it. (*Looks about.*) My, but it's fixed up real nice here, ain't it? This your best room?

(*They are sitting L.; PHILIP and 'BIJAH are up R., conversing in pantomime.*)

GRACE. This is one of the parlors.

DELIA. Now, think of that—two parlors! But, then, I s'pose you can afford it. It must be nice t' be rich.

GRACE. Y-yes, but money isn't everything. It will not buy happiness.

DELIA. I guess that's so, 'n' it's a good thing. If it could, there wouldn't be none left for poor folks. (*Carefully, looking toward PHILIP.*) Say, I feel awful sorry about your brother and Flora Goodwin. It 'most killed her, when he never wrote 'r come back, 'n' when she had t' own that he'd deserted her, we thought—wal, if Dave Weston hadn't stepped in, I guess she 'a' give right up. They're goin' t' be married.

GRACE. Flora Goodwin?

DELIA. Yes, and Dave Weston.

GRACE (*rising*). Oh! Does he know—my brother?

DELIA. Yes. We let it out.

GRACE. My poor brother.

PHILIP (*coming down, followed by 'BIJAH*). Grace, perhaps Mr. and Mrs. Finn would like to go to their room before dinner.

DELIA. Room? Land, we ain't goin' t' stay here all night, be we?

PHILIP. Oh, yes, you are; as many nights as you are in New York.

DELIA. I'm afraid it'll put you out.

GRACE. Not in the least. I will call Thompson.

(*Touches bell button.*)

'BIJAH. Wal, I s'pose I had better wash m' hands b'fore I eat supper, but they ain't no use goin' 'way up-stairs. Can't I step right int' the kitchen 'n' use the sink?

PHILIP (*smiling*). No, I think you'd better go up to your room. (*Enter THOMPSON, C. D. L.*) Thompson, show Mr. and Mrs. Finn to the blue room.

THOMPSON. Yes, sir. This way, please.

(*Offers to take the satchel from 'BIJAH.*)

'BIJAH (*giving it to him*). Much obliged, Mr. Thompson. (*Exit THOMPSON, C. D.*) Come on, Delia, you'd better comb y'r hair 'n' fix up a little.

DELIA. I s'pose I had. I don't feel none too neat, the way you get pushed 'n' hauled every which way in New York. (*Going.*) I'll put on m' other waist. (*To GRACE.*) Y' see, I didn't bring any other skirt, jest an extry shirt-waist, not bringing no trunk, 'n' havin' no expectations of goin' out in society. 'F I had, I'd 'a'

brung m' weddin' dress. 'That's real stylish, 'f I do say so. They wrote it up in "The County Banner" when they told about the wedd'n'. Said the bride was "attired in white," and all like that—meanin' me. But, dear me, I don't s'pose it'd amount t' much here where they's s' much style, 'n' all, would it?

GRACE. Oh, I dare say it is very nice, but you won't need it.

'BIJAH. That's jest what I told her. Ain't no use putt'n' on airs, I says, jest b'cause y've got t' be Mrs. Finn.

(Exit C. D. L., laughing.)

DELIA. The idee! As if he was some grand ketch. H'm!

(Exit after him, with a toss of her head, and a pretension of disdain.)

GRACE *(going to PHILIP, who sinks disconsolately into a chair, R. C.)*. Oh, Phil, dear, I am so sorry! Do you think it is too late?

(He simply nods his head, without looking up; she goes out C. D. L. After a pause, he rises, goes and looks off C. D. L. for a moment, then turns to go out R., but meets MRS. B. and remains.)

MRS. B. Where are those people?

PHILIP. Do you mean my guests, mother?

MRS. B. You know whom I mean. Where are they?

PHILIP. I have had them shown to the blue room, to prepare themselves for dinner. Mr. Finn wanted to wash his hands, and Mrs. Finn said she would change her shirt-waist.

MRS. B. Philip, I am surprised that you have lost all regard and respect for me, if you have none for yourself. Surely, you do not think I am going to tolerate those people in my house? If you do, you are very much mistaken. I shall have my dinner sent to my room, and I refuse to meet them again. *(Goes R.)*

PHILIP. Mother—wait.

MRS. B. *(turning)*. Well? Will you tell them——

PHILIP. Never mind those people. You tell me—tell me by what means you did—what you did.

MRS. B. Why, Philip,—what do you mean?

PHILIP. You know. Tell me.

MRS. B. You have no right to speak to me like this. I am your mother.

PHILIP. But I am not your son, if you refuse to do all in your power to right this great wrong.

MRS. B. But it is too late—she is ——

PHILIP. It is not too late to prove my manhood and my honesty. It is not too late to show that you are not utterly devoid of a mother's love and sympathy.

MRS. B. I did it for your good—I knew it would be for the best ——

PHILIP. But what—what did you do? What did you say?

MRS. B. My son, you mustn't look at me like that—you frighten me. I—I thought the end justified the means, and I told her you had only been flirting with her for a little summer amusement; that you were engaged to—to another—and that ——

PHILIP. And she believed you?

MRS. B. Y-yes—she believed it. Her own heart told her ——

PHILIP. Her own heart told her that I was true, that never in the world would I so deceive her. No, mother, there was more than that, there must have been. I want the whole truth.

MRS. B. Oh, my son, forgive me, I—I did not think you would take it so seriously. I thought—don't look at me so! Don't make me think I have committed some dreadful crime, when I only meant to save you, to ensure your future happiness.

PHILIP. What did you do?

MRS. B. I—showed her the letter you wrote me, in which you referred to Helen Blake. You said that she had deceived herself—misunderstood your attentions—that you had no thought of marrying her, and that you were not to blame for her foolishness. I—oh, will you never forgive me, Philip? Don't forget I am your mother, and that it was pride, ambition, that prompted me.

PHILIP. You showed her that letter, and made her think that it referred to her?

MRS. B. Yes. I—I erased Helen Blake's name and wrote hers in its place. It was easy. The letter she expected from you did not arrive, and everything worked into my hands.

PHILIP. But I wrote. Why did she not receive my letter?

MRS. B. I do not know. Don't lay that to me; I am not guilty of that too.

PHILIP. Yes, it worked well, and she believes me base and false. How she must despise me. (*With a sudden flash of anger, which he quickly suppresses.*) And you—you, my mother—did this thing! You—oh, mother, how could you?

MRS. B. (*going up to him, putting her hand on his arm*). I thought ——

PHILIP (*shaking her off, not roughly, but as if her touch pained him*). Don't—don't speak to me—not yet!

MRS. B. (*brokenly*). I—I did not think you would take it like this. I'll go to her, if ——

PHILIP (*with bitter sadness*). It is too late, mother. Your work was well done. I have just learned she is to marry another man. Oh, go, won't you? Leave me, or I can't bear it.

(*GRACE, 'BIJAH and DELIA are heard off L., talking and laughing. MRS. B. glances in that direction, at first haughtily, then turns and looks at PHILIP, softening, goes up and exits slowly to R. PHILIP sinks into chair, R. C., burying his face in his hands. The laughter outside continues as the curtain falls.*)

CURTAIN

ACT IV

SCENE.—*Sitting-room at Silverbrook Farm, comfortably but plainly furnished, after the style of well-to-do country people. Before the curtain rises the wedding march from "Lohengrin" is heard being played on a cabinet organ, off stage. Discover MRS. P., busily sewing, in a rocking-chair, L. She is working on a dress of some dark material, nearly completed, and rocks continually as she sews. DELIA stands R. C., scanning a cook-book.*

DELIA (*looking over at MRS. P.*). Land, Mis' Peasley, I don't see how you can sew, when you rock so.

MRS. P. Always do. I can work better. Kind o' jogs me along. I always said rockin'-chairs was made t' rock in, else they wouldn't 'a' had no rockers.

DELIA. All is, I couldn't sew 'n' rock too. I guess it would make my sewin' kind o' rocky. My, but this wedd'n' cake takes a lot of eggs.

MRS. P. (*the organ music having continued*). Listen t' Sate Miller playin' that piece. She's practicin' it for 'em t' march in by, at the wedd'n'.

DELIA (*sitting R., still reading*). For my part, seems t' me a dirge 'd be more appropriate.

MRS. P. My goodness, Delia Slocum, how c'n you say sech things? I guess the Goodwins wouldn't thank you, 'f they was t' hear it. (*The music stops.*) There, she's stopped. She comes over here t' practice it on their organ. Sate's quite a musician. But dirge! And a wedd'n' comin' off t'-morrow. Wal, I must say, Delia Slocum —

DELIA. Slocum? I guess I ain't a widow yet, n'r got any divorce. You seem t' f'rgit I've marched t' that same tune.

MRS. P. Land, Delia—Mis' Finn—I beg y'r pardon. But, somehow, you don't seem no more married 'n you used t', 'n' I sort o' f'rgit. 'N' there you went on a tower, too, all the way t' New York. I guess you seen enough there t' fill a book.

DELIA. I guess we did. I don't s'pose 'Bijah'll ever git through talkin' about it. 'Most everybuddy he knows 's got so they run when they see him comin', f'r fear he'll tell 'em somethin' about New York. It's jest like them that went to the world's fair. After they'd been back a spell, you might 'a' thought they had the mumps 'r smallpox, the way they was got away from. I tell 'Bijah, but it don't make any difference. For my part, I wait till I'm asked.

MRS. P. I s'pose it is quite a place?

DELIA. Place? It's all the places y' ever heard of put int' one, 'n' some more added. It's like a thousand circus parades that never git by, 'n' then start all over ag'in.

MRS. P. My! how I'd like t' go there, 'f I ever had time t' spare. I s'pose it's pretty grand where them Burleighs live?

DELIA. "Grand" ain't no name for it. It's sumptual. When I think what Flora Goodwin's lost, t' take up with a plain farmer—wal, it's beyond me. It's my opinion it ain't his fault.

MRS. P. (*still sewing and rocking industriously*). Who—Dave's?

DELIA. No, Mr. Burleigh's, of course. To be sure, he never said much, that is, before me, but I could see he was terrible broke up when we told him 't Flora was goin' t' be married to Dave Weston. He give right up then, 's if they wa'n't no hopes, but I think it was all through some interferin' and misunderstandin', 'n' I shall think so to my dyin' day.

MRS. P. I s'pose it's too late now for 'em ever to ——

DELIA. Wal, Mis' Peasley, what you thinkin' of? Of course it is. Ain't the wedd'n' t'-morrow? Looks likely they'll be a change of bridegrooms now. It ain't much like Dave Weston t' give her up, after gitt'n' this far.

(*The organ is again heard, playing "O Promise Me," or some other appropriate wedding piece.*)

MRS. P. There's Sate Miller, ag'in, playin' another tune. I don't see what they want t' play sech solemn pieces at a wedd'n' for. She plays real well though, don't she?

DELIA. Wal, hadn't she ought t', anybuddy 't gets fifty cents a Sunday for playin' in church? They're goin' t' give her two dollars, too, for playin' at the wedd'n'.

MRS. P. You don't say? Two dollars, for not more 'n twenty minutes' work. I wish I could earn money that easy.

DELIA (*seated R.*). I wonder how many miles a day you rock?

MRS. P. (*stops rocking and looks sharply at DELIA*). Anybuddy 'd think it was wearin' out your rockers, the way you worry about it. I guess I'm makin' this go-away dress faster 'n you're makin' that cake.

DELIA. I didn't mean anything, Mis' Peasley. Seems t' me it's a pretty late day t' be makin' the wedd'n' clothes.

MRS. P. (*again rocking*). Wal, I was s' busy they had Mis' Patchin' make this, 'n' it was sech a botch I've had to fix it all over. I don't mean t' brag, but—wal, I wouldn't hang the things she makes in my wood-shed.

DELIA. Of course, she ain't got the style you have, Mis' Peasley. Everybuddy said my wedd'n' outfit looked fine. You're off ag'in!

MRS. P. Wal, 'f I don't rock I can't sew, 'n' you know I'm so rushed on this dress 't I ain't got a minute t' spare.

DELIA (*rising*). I must go 'n' make this cake. I told Mis' Goodwin I'd come over 'n' help her out, seein' they's so much t' do. (*Goes to door L.*) Somehow, though, I don't take much interest.

MRS. P. N'r me. I jest can't help thinkin' Flora Goodwin's doin' somethin' she'll regret. She's marryin' one man when she loves another.

DELIA. Land, Mis' Peasley, how you talk! If any of 'em should hear you say that —

MRS. P. I wouldn't want 'em to. But you know it's the truth, 's well 's I do, Delia Slocum—I mean "Finn." I guess —

DELIA (*looking R.*). Sh! here comes Mis' Goodwin.

(*Enter SARAH, R.*)

SARAH. Flora's just been trying on her wedding dress. It fits splendid, Mrs. Peasley.

MRS. P. It ought to, the work I put on it. I guess you won't be ashamed of her with it on.

SARAH. No, I guess not. My, Delia, it seems like old times to have you around. It's real kind of you to come in and help so.

DELIA. Land, Mis' Goodwin, it's jest a pleasure. It ain't nothin' t' what you done for me when I turned fr'm Slocum t' Finn.

(*Exit, L.*)

SARAH. Delia's a good girl.

MRS. P. Yes, she's worth a dozen of 'Lizy Bates. She's been tellin' me how grand it is t' the Burleighs', there in New York. See what your Flora might 've had.

SARAH. Oh, Mis' Peasley, that's all in the past. It's the man you get, not what goes with him. Dave Weston is one of the best men that ever lived.

MRS. P. I ain't sayin' a word ag'inst Dave, but if I'm any jedge of men, they's been a big mistake somewheres. Of course, it ain't none o' my business, but I don't b'lieve Mr. Burleigh ever done anything that wa'n't right. It's my opinion the truth never come out.

SARAH. Then I hope it never will, now. It's too late to do any good.

MRS. P. Yes, I s'pose it is. Wal, I hope Flora'll be happy. Seems t' me, though, she looks kind o' pindlin'. I always s'posed a bride looked 's if she was glad of it.

SARAH. Flora didn't have to have Dave, if she didn't want him. He's her own choice.

MRS. P. I hope you ain't mad, Mis' Goodwin. I didn't mean anything.

SARAH. Of course I'm not mad, but I don't like to hear such talk. Mr. Burleigh is nothing to Flora any more, and she's getting a good husband that'll make her happy. (*Goes and looks over MRS. P.'s shoulder.*) How you getting along with that dress?

MRS. P. Oh, I'll have it done all right; but Selina Patchin' certainly did come near makin' a mess of it. It's ready t' try on ag'in. Where's Flora?

SARAH. I'll call her. (*Goes to R., calls.*) Flora! Flora, come here a minute. Mrs. Peasley wants you to try on this dress.

MRS. P. Jest the waist, that's all. The skirt's all right. Where they goin' on their trip?

SARAH. To Niagara Falls, and from there to Rome, to visit some of his folks.

MRS. P. Land, sounds like they was go'n' t' take a trip t' Europe, don't it? (*Sees FLORA, who enters, R.*) Here she is.

FLORA (*who is rather pale, pauses R.*). Did you want me, mother?

SARAH. Mrs. Peasley does. Your going-away dress is ready to try on again. I'll go in the kitchen and help Delia. There's plenty to be done.

(*Exit, L.*)

(*FLORA comes to C.; MRS. P. rises, straightening out the waist.*)

MRS. P. Jest think, Flora; t'-morrow's your wedd'n' day. I s'pose you're awful happy? You ought to be.

FLORA. Why, of course I ought to be, Mrs. Peasley—and I am.

MRS. P. Wal, I must say, you don't look it. I never heard of a willin' bride lookin' as doleful as you do.

FLORA. Why, Mrs. Peasley, how can you say such things? You ought to be ashamed to talk like that. I am happy, and you have no right to—to——

(*Pauses, almost in tears, vainly striving to hide her emotion; turns away, to R.*)

MRS. P. (*down to R. C.*). Mebbe I haven't, 'n' mebbe I'm meddlin', but you can't deceive me. It's Mr. Burleigh you love, Flora Goodwin, 'n' you're tryin' t' console y'rself with another man.

FLORA (*with a faint show of indignation*). Mrs. Peasley, how dare you? I won't listen——

(*Starts to go out R.*)

MRS. P. I s'pose you're mad, 'n' mebbe you've got a right t' be. But it ain't my fault if the truth hurts. It's your fault, though, if you marry one man when your heart b'longs to another. It ain't treatin' him right, 'n' it ain't treatin' y'rself right, 'n' it's more 'n likely you'll both suffer for it. (*Passes her and goes*

to R.) I hope you'll f'rgive me 'f I've said too much, but it come out b'fore I knew it. When you get ready t' try this waist on, come in the bedroom. I'll be in there.

(Exit, R.)

(FLORA looks after her for a moment, as if dazed, then breaks down, covers her face with her hands and sobs. After a pause, AMOS enters D. in flat, followed by 'BIJAH. The latter is dressed in a cheap imitation of city style. They do not see FLORA, who has gone to R., where she pauses and listens.)

AMOS. I d' know, 'Bijah, but it seems t' me 'tain't no use rakin' that up at this late day. Might 's well let by-gones be by-gones.

'BIJAH. Not when y' c'n clear up a man's name for him, Mr. Goodwin, 'n' prove 't he ain't the scallawag folks has thought him. Mr. Burleigh—(he stands so that he happens to see FLORA, while AMOS does not, and abruptly changes the subject) Mr. Burleigh took us around t' see all the sights, 'n' what we didn't see wa'n't wuth seein'.

AMOS (bewildered). Hey? What's that you're sayin'?

'BIJAH. 'S I was sayin', they've dug a hole clean under th' river, f'r 's much 's seventeen mile, 'n' the cars run right through there, under the water 'n' all, 'n' not a drop o' wet, 'n' some o' the buildin's 'r as high 's forty o' the Methodis' church steeples one on top o' the other, 'n'——

AMOS. You wa'n't talkin' about no—— (Sees FLORA.) Oh! (Goes toward her.) Hello, there, little one. I didn't see y'. Why, what y' lookin' like that f'r?

FLORA (striving to conceal her agitation). Why, nothing, father. I—it's nothing. I—Mrs. Peasley wants me; she's waiting for me, and I—— (Runs off to R.)

AMOS. I guess she heard.

'BIJAH. Course she did. See how quick I changed the subject? I call that pretty cute, the way I done it. I guess she didn't ketch on to what we was talkin' about. As I was sayin', I'd be willin' t' bet my bottom dollar 't we'd find out Mr. Burleigh's 's square a man 's ever walked in shoe leather, if the truth was known.

AMOS. I used t' think he was, but things turned out t' look

different. 'T any rate, 'tain't no use rakin' it up now, so I guess we won't talk about it any more, 'Bijah. (*Goes to L.*) I want t' see 'f I can find mother.

(*Exit, L.*)

'BIJAH (*shaking his head to one side energetically, two or three times*). By jing! if I had my way — Oh, that you, Delia, dear?

DELIA (*who has entered and stands in door L., her hands white with flour and a good-sized dab of it on her face*). Yes, it's me. Land, what you dressed up in them clothes for, this time o' day? Ain't you got no sense?

'BIJAH (*approaching her*). Come here 'n' give me a kiss, sweetness.

DELIA. Go 'way with y'. Ain't you silly, dressin' up in y'r best clothes 'n' askin' me for a kiss, this time o' day. (*He attempts to kiss her; she gives him a playful slap, getting flour on his face.*) There!

'BIJAH. Ouch! that ain't the kind o' smack I wanted. All right, now I won't tell y' something.

DELIA. H'm! I guess you don't know much worth tellin'. What is it?

'BIJAH. Wouldn't you like t' know? It's something about Mr. Burleigh and — (*Sees DAVE, who has entered from R., through door in flat.*) Oh—"Behold, the bridegroom cometh."

DELIA. Why, 'Bijah Finn, that's wicked. Hello, Dave.

(*DAVE, who is rather pale and evidently stirred by some emotion which he attempts to hide, stands C., staring straight at the door R., not noticing the others.*)

DAVE. Is Flora in there?

DELIA (*coming to L. C.*). I think so, Dave. I guess she's tryin' on.

DAVE. Tell her I want to see her, please. Now.

DELIA. Why, Dave, how you look! Has anything —

DAVE. I want to see her.

DELIA (*crossing to R.*). All right, Dave. I'll tell her.

(*Exit, R.*)

'BIJAH. I guess you're kind o' upset, ain't y', Dave, so nigh gitt'n' hitched? I was. I tell you, 'tain't no fool

thing, this gitt'n' married business. Not that I wish I hadn't, 'r that you ever will, but it's a kind o' serious step the best way y' can put it. Of course, gitt'n' the girl you be, 'n' all—— (*Notices that DAVE does not look at him or pay any attention to what he is saying.*) Oh! Wal, they say love 's blind, 'n' 't looks t' me 's if it was deaf 'n' dumb, too.

(*Enter DELIA, R.*)

DELIA. She's comin' right out, Dave. (*Crosses to L.*) You come on in the kitchen with me, 'Bijah. I want you t' beat them eggs.

(*Exit, L.*)

'BIJAH (L.). All right, I'll beat 'em. Cheer up, Dave; the wust is t' come.

(*Exit, L., chuckling.*)

(*DAVE, after standing a moment in silence, clenches his fist, with an expression of determination. Enter FLORA, R., wearing the same skirt as before, with the waist upon which MRS. P. was working. She does not see DAVE, who is up R., until he speaks.*)

DAVE. Flora.

FLORA. Why, Dave, you—Delia said you wanted to see me.

DAVE. Yes, I do. I—oh, Flora, how pretty you look!

FLORA. It's the clothes, Dave. Doesn't this waist fit nicely? Mrs. Peasley just finished it. It's the one I'm going to wear on our trip.

DAVE. Yes, I know—and it's very nice, and ——

(*He turns from her, as if his courage almost failed him.*)

FLORA. Why, Dave, what's the matter? Has anything happened?

DAVE (*still with his face turned away*). Yes—yes, something has happened. I have something to say—to tell you—and—(*turning to her*) I—oh, I would rather die than tell it to you, but I must—I must!

FLORA. Dave! Dave, what is it? You frighten me.

(*She puts her hand on his arm.*)

DAVE (*moving away from her*). No!—I'm not worthy for you to touch, to speak to. I'm a cheat—a thief—I'm not fit to be your husband, nor even to be your friend. Oh, I have tried to keep it to myself, to keep still and let you be my wife, but I can't do it; I can't take you with a lie on my soul, knowing what a cheat I am!

FLORA. Dave! Dave!

DAVE. Oh, it's true, I tell you—true! (*Takes a sealed, addressed and stamped letter from his pocket and holds it out toward her.*) There it is—take it—the thing that will prove how low and dishonest I am. I know it will make you hate me, but—take it!

FLORA (*taking the letter, mechanically*). Why, Dave, I don't understand. What is it? What do you mean?

DAVE. Look at it.

FLORA (*looking at the letter, at first not comprehending*). It's for me. It's—it—oh, for me—from——

DAVE. Yes, from—him. Look at the postmark.

FLORA. "August—15." Last August. Why, it's an old letter. It was sent to me, and I never received it. And it's from——

DAVE. From Mr. Burleigh. It's the letter you expected, that you thought never came. I got it out of the post-office, that day, and I kept it, so that you would think he hadn't written. I thought you would think he had forgotten you, and that—oh, I was crazy with jealousy, and I wanted you so bad that I was willing to do anything, if I could only get you. I didn't look ahead, I was blind—foolish—wicked, and I have tried to keep still, but I couldn't, and so I have told you. I know you won't marry me now, and that it's all over between us, but I had to tell you. I don't expect you to forgive me, but I had to tell you—I had to!

(*He breaks down, sinks into a chair, covering his face with his hands.*)

FLORA. Oh, Dave, how could you? How could you do such a thing?

DAVE (*looking up*). Because I thought you belonged to me, and that he had no right to take you from me. I thought you were only infatuated with his good looks and his city manner, and that you would forget him

and love me again. I know—it was wrong—it was mean and cowardly—but there are times when a man will do anything to get the woman he loves.

FLORA. You loved me as much as that, Dave?

DAVE (*he has risen*). Yes, but I know now that even that doesn't excuse me. You wouldn't want a thief and a cheat for a husband. I tried to give you up, to tell you, but I couldn't. I meant to burn that letter, but somehow it seemed to me I couldn't do that, either. It seemed to be alive—it was my conscience. You can't kill your conscience, it is bound to make itself heard some time, and I couldn't burn that letter—it was bound to bring me to my senses at last—to make me confess—to give—you—up—and now—now, I have done it.

(*He again breaks down, turns from her and goes up c., about to go out, but pauses as FLORA speaks.*)

FLORA. Dave! You did wrong, but—it was because you loved me—because you felt you had not been treated right, and you were not altogether responsible, I know you weren't, and I—I forgive you, Dave. See!

(*He is L. C. ; she C. She quickly tears the letter in pieces.*)

DAVE (*taking a step toward her*). Flora!

FLORA. There! the letter is gone; it is all gone. We will forget it, as if it had never happened, and—and we'll be happy, Dave.

(*She goes to him, he reaches out his hands, as if about to take her in his arms, but suddenly draws back.*)

DAVE. No—no—I can't, I mustn't. I have given you up—I——

FLORA. No, Dave, no. I am yours.

DAVE. No—not mine—his—his——

FLORA. His? Why, Dave, what do you mean? I am yours. There is no one else. No one.

DAVE. You belong to him. It's not me you want—it's him. I wrote to him—I told him—and he—he——

(*Suddenly turns from her and rushes out door in flat, L.*)

FLORA. Dave!

(*She goes up to door, looking out after him. She stands thus in silence. After a pause, enter MRS. P., R.*)

MRS. P. Why, Flora, what you standin' there for? I thought Dave was here.

FLORA (*without looking around, suddenly starts back, with a stifled cry*). Oh! I saw—it's—oh!

(*Turns and runs hurriedly off R., in great agitation, without looking back.*)

MRS. P. For the land's sake, what's happened now, I wonder? (*Goes up to door or window.*) She must 'a' gone crazy. (*Looks out. After a slight pause, starts in great excitement.*) Why, for goodness' sake, if it ain't—it is, as sure as—well, of all things—(*rushing to L.*) Mr. Goodwin—Mis' Goodwin——

(*Exit, L.*)

(*There is a pause, then GRACE, in traveling costume, and carrying a hand-bag, enters C. D. She stands for a moment looking about, then starts L., meets DELIA as she enters.*)

DELIA. My land,—you? Here!

GRACE. Why, it's Mrs. Finn. (*Holds out her hand.*) Aren't you glad to see me?

DELIA. Why, yes, I s'pose I be—of course. But where under the canopy did you drop from?

GRACE. From that rickety old stage-coach that I thought never would get here.

DELIA. And he's come with you? Mis' Peasley jest said——

GRACE. Philip? Yes, he is here, too.

DELIA. Well, of all things! (*Enter SARAH, L.*) Mis' Goodwin, here's Miss Burleigh, and—she didn't come alone.

SARAH (*coming to C.*). Miss Burleigh? How do you do?
(*Enter AMOS, L.*) Amos, here's Miss Burleigh.

AMOS. How d' do, miss?

GRACE. I am very glad to see you, both of you, and I hope—I hope I am not unwelcome?

(*She shakes hands with them; they submit, seeming scarcely to realize what is taking place.*)

FARM FOLKS

AMOS. Why, of course you're welcome, only, y' see—wal, you've took us by s'prise, kind o', 'n'—wal, Mis' Peasley says as how y' didn't come alone, 'n'——

(*Enter MRS. P., L. She stands L., SARAH near her, AMOS L. C., GRACE C., and DELIA R. C.*)

GRACE. Yes, Mr. Goodwin, my brother came with me. There has been a terrible misunderstanding, and he has come to set it right.

AMOS. It's pretty late now, seems t' me. The wedd'n' 's comin' off t'-morr'w.

GRACE. Is it ever too late to right a wrong, Mr. Goodwin, or to prove that a person who has been misrepresented is innocent? No, it is never too late for that, and my brother is here to be restored to your good opinion, and to prove that he never did one thing **wrong** or **unmanly**. Mr. Weston sent for him.

SARAH. Mr. Weston? Dave?

GRACE. Yes. May I see Miss Goodwin? I have something to say to her.

SARAH. Why, yes, I guess so. She's in the other room. Delia, will you show her?

DELIA. Come right this way, Miss Burleigh. (*Goes to R.*)

GRACE (*following her*). Thank you.

(*Exit DELIA, R., followed by GRACE.*)

SARAH. Oh, dear, I don't know what to make of it. Here she's going to be married to Dave, and he's come back. Dave sent for him, and—I don't know how Flora's ever going to stand it.

AMOS. 'There, there now, mother, you jest let 'em be. Things'll come out all right. If we've misjedge'd him, and it was him she wanted, and——

(*He has his arm about her and they have gone to L.*)

SARAH. Why, Amos, do you mean——

AMOS. I d' know what I mean, only—— (*Enter DAVE, from L., through door in flat. They pause as they see him.*) Why, here's Dave.

(*DAVE stands up C. He is very pale, but firm and brave. AMOS and SARAH are L., MRS. P. L. C. DELIA enters and stands R.*)

DAVE. Mr. Goodwin—Mrs. Goodwin—I have come to say good-bye. I—I am going away.

(The organ music again starts, this time playing "Hearts and Flowers," softly.)

AMOS. Going away? Why, Dave!

SARAH. Before the wedding, Dave?

DAVE. Yes, to-day—now. Oh, there'll be a wedding, I guess, but I won't be here. It will be a happier one without me. I want you all to know I've tried to do what's right, that's all—tried to make up for what I did that was wrong and wicked. I don't expect you to forgive me—not yet—but some day, maybe, when you can begin to realize that it was because I loved her and thought she belonged to me—then—well, good-bye. *(About to go.)*

SARAH. Why, Dave, ain't you going to say good-bye to Flora?

DAVE. No, I mustn't see her again—I can't. Tell her—oh, never mind—she knows. She said she forgave me. She's an angel. Good-bye.

(As he goes, AMOS and SARAH start toward him, but he rushes off up L. They stand a moment looking after him, then SARAH bursts into tears.)

SARAH. Oh, Amos, I don't know what it's all about. I don't understand.

AMOS *(as he leads her to L.)*. Never mind. It's going t' be all right. There, there, don't you fret.

(Exeunt, L.)

(MRS. P. has gone up to C., stands looking off. DELIA crosses to L.)

MRS. P. Wal, what do you think of that? Did you ever?

DELIA. That's jest like Dave. Ain't it brave of him?

MRS. P. Land, do you s'pose she's goin' t' have Mr. Burleigh now, after what's happened? I b'lieve I'd ruther have Dave Weston, anyway.

DELIA. But it ain't him she loves, 'n' love's somethin'

y' can't account for. I'm goin' t' finish that cake, anyhow. (*Goes L.*)

MRS. P. I s'pose y' might's well. Cake's cake, wedd'n' 'r no wedd'n'. (*Looks off through door or window.*)

Oh, my land, there he is! He's comin' in here.

DELIA. Then you come on. He don't want t' see us, yet.

MRS. P. No, I don't s'pose he does.

'BIJAH (*who wears an apron and holds a large spoon covered with flour, appears in door L.*). Say, come 'n' see 'f I've stirred this cake enough.

DELIA. Yes, I'm comin'. You go back in there.

(*She pushes him out L., following.*)

MRS. P. (*as she goes L., looking back curiously*). Wal, I declare, if it don't beat anything I ever read in "The Fireside Companion"!

(*Exit, L.*)

(*After a slight pause, PHILIP enters door up L. The music continues. He stands a moment looking about, then starts down stage, as GRACE enters R. She goes to him.*)

GRACE. Philip! She's in there. I have told her.

PHILIP. And she will see me? (*GRACE nods assent.*)

What—what does she say?

GRACE. She is perplexed—frightened, but she loves you, Phil, only you. I am sure she will —

PHILIP (*starting toward R.*). Let me see her. I —

GRACE (*detaining him*). Wait. She must have a few moments to think—to realize what it means. It is all so sudden, so strange, she hardly knows what to think or to do. (*She stands L. C., so that she can see FLORA, who appears in door R., while PHILIP, who is down R. C., does not see her.*) Oh!—I—Philip—look!

(*GRACE turns him about so that he sees FLORA, then runs off L., leaving them alone. FLORA, with her head drooping, her hands tightly clasped, stands tremblingly leaning against door. PHILIP takes a step toward her, holding out his hands, then pauses.*)

PHILIP. Flora!

(She remains silent, but raises her eyes and looks at him with love and happiness, then breaks down, covering her face with her hands, takes a few steps toward him, but totters and nearly falls. He springs forward, catching her, clasping her in his arms and drawing her to him. She lets her head fall on his shoulder and he kisses her rapturously. The music, which has been soft up to this point, now changes again to the wedding march, which is played triumphantly, continuing for several moments after the curtain falls.)

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